



St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery

'Be the BEST you can be'



Attendance and Punctuality Policy for Primary Age Pupils

This policy is written with reference to the
Christian Foundation of the school.

'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.'
Colossians 3:23

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Approved by: | Local Governing Body | Date: 19/01/2023 |
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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Contents

1. Aim
2. Statutory and Legal Guidance
3. Roles and Responsibilities
 - 3.1 Governing board
 - 3.2 Parents/carers
 - 3.3 Pupils
 - 3.4 Headteacher
 - 3.5 Designated senior leader responsible for attendance
 - 3.6 Class teachers
 - 3.7 School administration team
4. Recording Attendance
 - 4.1 Attendance codes
 - 4.2 Unplanned absence
 - 4.3 Planned absence
 - 4.4 Lateness and punctuality
 - 4.5 Following up unexplained absences
 - 4.6 Supporting the attendance of vulnerable pupils
 - 4.7 Informing parents/carers about their child's attendance
 - 4.8 Removing pupils from the school roll
5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence
 - 5.1 Approval for term-time absence
 - 5.2 Requesting leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances'
 - 5.3 Holidays in term time
 - 5.4 Pupils on part-time timetables
 - 5.5 Legal sanctions
6. Strategies Used to Promote Attendance
7. Attendance Monitoring
 - 7.1 Data collation
 - 7.2 Analysing attendance data
 - 7.3 Using data to improve attendance
 - 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence
8. Attendance Support and Intervention
9. Policy Monitoring
10. Links with Other Policies

Appendices

1. Key Attendance Contacts
2. Definitions Used Across the Policy
3. Attendance Codes

1. Aim

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos which values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools, our Local Authority, and partner agencies when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Statutory and Legal Guidance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy meets the requirements of current government guidance, [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (May 2022) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#) (updated May 2020). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations in 2013, only allowing headteachers to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Governing board

The school's Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day or for timetabled sessions where part-time arrangements have been temporarily approved by the headteacher
- Ensure their child arrives punctually for the start of each session
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with a minimum of 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, medical appointments for their child are made outside the school day

3.3 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and on time

3.4 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Asking the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices where necessary

3.5 Designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Champion)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data, support, and intervention (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Arranging for targeted attendance intervention and support to be delivered to pupils and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to ask the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms C Lampert and they can be contacted via 01761 434548 and/or clampert@stmaryswrithlington.co.uk

3.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance at the start of each session (morning and afternoon) using the correct codes (see Appendix 3)
- Submitting populated registers to the school office when the register closes for each session (see Section 4)

3.7 School administration team

School administration staff will:

- Take calls and respond to emails/text messages from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record this on the school's management information system (MIS)
- Transfer calls from parents to relevant members of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4. Recording Attendance

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Absence can be an indicator of neglect and abuse and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. When parents make daily contact regarding their child's absence, the contact and the reason given for the absence will be recorded. Absences will be coded on the child's register in line with the reason for that absence.

Schools are required to take a register twice a day for every pupil. This happens at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. These registration periods form the basis of each pupil's attendance record.

Our registration periods are as follows:

| | Registers open | Registers close |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Morning session | 8.45 am | 9.00am |
| Afternoon session | 1.00 pm | 1.15pm |

Following morning registration, if a pupil is absent and a reason for that absence has not been provided, the following action will be taken:

- Parents will receive a phone call on the first day of the unexplained absence
- If it is not possible to get a response on the first or second day, a home visit will be undertaken

When children with a social worker are absent and no reason is provided, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the pupil's social worker.

4.1 Attendance codes

Each time the register is taken, class teachers record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Further detail about the statutory attendance codes we use can be found in Appendix 3.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents are required to inform the school as soon as possible if their child is absent or due to be absent. **This should be done on every day of absence.**

Parents are asked to inform us of any absences as follows:

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| By phone | 01761 434548 |
| By email | office@stmaryswrithlington.co.uk |

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 details which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Each school day is split into two sessions; morning and afternoon. Registers are opened at the beginning of each session and close 15 minutes later, as shown in the table below:

| Morning session | Afternoon session |
|--|--|
| Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.40am | Pupils are expected to attend registration by 1.00 pm |
| Registers open at 8.45 am | Registers open at 1.00 pm |
| Registers close at 9.00am | Registers close at 1.15pm |
| Pupils that arrive after 8.45am will be recorded as late (L code) | Pupils that arrive after 1.00pm will be recorded as late (L code) |
| Pupils that arrive after 9.00am will be marked as late after registers have closed (U code). This counts as an unauthorised absence. | Pupils that arrive after 1.15am will be marked as late after registers have closed (U code). This counts as an unauthorised absence. |

Pupils' punctuality will be regularly monitored and parents will be contacted to discuss persistent lateness. Lateness after the close of the registers could result in a request for support from the Local Authority's Attendance & Welfare Support Service.

4.5 Following up unexplained absences

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend or stops attending without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts school staff may take reasonable steps to check on the welfare of the child. Steps could include visiting the house to speak to the parent/child and to put support in as needed, contacting the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If unreported and/or unexplained absence continues, the school will consider involving an education attendance officer and/or informing the Local Authority that the child is missing from education

4.6 Supporting the attendance of vulnerable pupils

The attendance of vulnerable pupils is monitored particularly closely. If we have concerns about a pupil we work closely with our staff and with external support services to ensure parents understand the importance of good attendance and attendance procedures.

Additional measures are in place to monitor the attendance of vulnerable pupils.

- The attendance of vulnerable pupils is monitored on a daily basis and absences are immediately reported to the appropriate staff member to ensure contact is made with their parent as quickly as possible
- Daily contact is made with parents and any external professionals such as social workers, in relation to absences of vulnerable pupils or those at risk of persistent or severe absence
- Pupils with complex needs (including those with medical needs) will be supported to ensure their attendance is maximised and its improvement is planned for - the attendance of pupils in this group will be monitored daily
- When a pupil is dual registered or accessing learning off-site, their attendance at that provision will be monitored daily
Note: The school holds legal responsibility for these pupils' attendance and safeguarding
- Pupils with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) whose attendance is poor are monitored through our internal school processes and offered additional support in line with their needs

4.7 Informing parents/carers about their child's attendance

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels by:

- Informing parents by letter should attendance fall below 95% or late (L) marks are increasing or should there be an increase of unauthorised absences
- Including data on written reports at the end of the year
- As part of informal conversations with teachers and conversation at Parents Evenings
- Written letter to celebrate improved attendance at school

4.8 Removing pupils from the school roll

Schools are required to inform their local authority when a pupil is removed from roll. Procedures are in place to ensure this information is shared in a timely manner when we plan to take pupils off-roll, or when they:

- Leave the school to be home educated
- Move beyond a reasonable distance from the school
- Are permanently excluded (expelled)

Pupils who are expected to start attending St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery but fail to take up the place will be referred to the Local Authority.

When a pupil leaves St Mary's, the pupil's new address, school and expected started date will be recorded. This information will be passed to the Local Authority.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the child's new school / education setting has informed us that they are now on their register. Information, including attendance data, will then be transferred using a Common Transfer File.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The decision about how absences are coded rests with the headteacher and in some cases, absences may not be authorised even when a reason is provided. Additional information or evidence may be requested before an absence is authorised. This may occur when there are concerns about a pupil's attendance, even if it is related to illness, or when the reason provided is believed to be false.

Authorised absence means that your child is absent with the school's approval. Examples of authorised absence include: illness, medical treatment - including time spent in hospital, time a family needs during a crisis, and holidays under exceptional circumstances e.g. for service personnel returning from a posting abroad. We may require evidence in support of authorising absence. Please note that routine appointments such as dental check-ups, are expected to be made outside of the school day.

Unauthorised absence is avoidable absence i.e. when a child's education should be the priority and parents/carers choose for their child to miss school and the school, which shares responsibility for the child's education with parents, is not supportive of the absence. Examples of unauthorised absence include: family days-out; visiting relatives (in the UK or abroad); oversleeping, long weekends, holidays that overlap with the start or end of term, holidays taken in term time, attending weddings (including travel to and from these events) except for immediate family i.e. a parent or sibling.

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

In line with legislation and Local Authority guidance, pupil absences can only be authorised when:

- A pupil is too unwell to attend school
- A pupil is attending a medical appointment that is unavoidable (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- A pupil is taking part in a recognised religious observance
- A pupil is prevented from attending due to school transport not being available (this only applies to transport that is arranged by the Local Authority or the school)

Absences may also be authorised at the discretion of the headteacher when:

- Term-time leave is requested, and its circumstances are exceptional
- A pupil has one or more medical appointments

- The parent of a pupil is engaged in a trade that requires them to travel and they have previously attended school as often as the nature of that trade permits (this relates only to families with Traveller status)
- Other exceptional circumstances e.g., a close family bereavement

5.2 Requesting leave of absence for ‘exceptional circumstances’

Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be obtained from the school office/website and submitted for consideration by the headteacher no less than 2 weeks prior to the date of the requested absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The headteacher can only consider applications for leave of absence that are made by the resident parent (the parent with whom the child normally resides).

When an application for term-time leave is declined, any resulting absences will be unauthorised, and the Attendance & Welfare Support Service may be notified.

We define an ‘exceptional circumstance’ as a ‘one off’ event that it is important the child attends, and which cannot take place during the weekend or a school holiday. An example of this would be a funeral or wedding of a close family member that has been planned during term time.

Requests for term-time leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis and where term-time leave is agreed, the headteacher will determine how many sessions may be authorised.

5.3 Holidays in term time

School holidays and INSET days are published as soon as the school has agreed these although they may be subject to change. Holidays should be taken during these times.

In line with Government amendments to the 2006 regulations (see Section 2), the headteacher cannot and will not authorise school absence purely for the reason of a family holiday. If a parent feels they have an exceptional circumstance they must speak to the headteacher prior to making any arrangements or taking any absence.

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children receive education in accordance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and if on a school roll, that they regularly attend school. However, there is a discretionary power held by headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers should note that:

- This is not an entitlement and a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance
- Written applications for term time leave can only be accepted from the parent/s with whom the child normally resides
- The headteacher will not authorise absence if they believe it is to the detriment of a child’s education

The Headteacher and Local Governing Body have determined that:

- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the headteacher at the earliest opportunity and no less than 2 weeks prior to the requested date
- Supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted at the time of the request for absence
- In making their decision, the headteacher will consider
 - whether the reason is exceptional
 - the child's previous school attendance
 - that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year
 - that the requested absence does not coincide with statutory assessment periods

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- Attending a wedding or funeral of an immediate family member i.e. a parent, sibling or grandparent

As soon as the headteacher had made their decision to authorise or not to authorise a parent's request for term time leave for their child the response to the person making the request will be set out in writing and handed in person.

Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstances. If your request is authorised you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is the responsibility of the parent and the school is not obliged to provide work for a child to complete.

If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The parent will be breaking the law and the Attendance & Welfare Support Service will be notified. In such circumstances, the parent/s may be liable to pay a fine and/or be prosecuted for non-attendance (see Section 5.5 below).

5.4 Pupils on part-time timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies as appropriate, to come to a mutually agreeable arrangement. Any part-time timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to a full-time timetable.

Periods within the formal part-time timetable when it has been agreed that the pupil will not be in school will be recorded as authorised absence.

5.5 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

Unauthorised absence relating to term-time leave being taken will be sent to the Local Authority for consideration of a penalty notice when 10 or more sessions are unauthorised. This is likely to result in the Local Authority issuing each parent with a penalty notice for each child absent from school.

If issued with a fine or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take account of:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- An excluded or suspended pupil being found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

The Attendance & Welfare Support Service issues penalty notices on behalf of the Local Authority in line with the B&NES Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, which is available at <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/media/2773>.

If a penalty notice is issued and not paid the Local Authority will consider whether to withdraw the notice or prosecute the parent/s in line with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This can result in a fine of up to £1,000 for each offence.

In exceptional cases, the Local Authority may seek to prosecute parents in line with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 without issuing a penalty notice.

6. Strategies Used to Promote Attendance

At St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery we use a number of reward systems to promote and celebrate good attendance, improved attendance and attendance that is improving because barriers have been overcome. The approaches we use are detailed here:

- Liaise with parents/carers on an individual basis
- Celebrate with classes that have 100% attendance
- Letter to parents/carers when attendance has improved
- Celebrate attendance in the whole-school newsletter

7. Attendance Monitoring

The leadership team and staff supporting attendance will hold regular meetings where attendance is discussed and tracked so that suitable support and interventions are put in place as quickly as possible.

How we monitor attendance and the support that is offered is determined on a case-by-case basis. These decisions are regularly reviewed by the attendance, safeguarding and pastoral teams in school. Support from the Attendance & Welfare Support Service may also be requested and implemented.

Pupils whose attendance becomes a cause for concern will be supported by dedicated members of our staff who will make regular contact with them. This will support them to identify and remove any barriers, improve their attendance and to re-engage with learning. This work is robustly recorded and the impact of it is monitored regularly.

7.1 Data collation

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data termly (6 times per year), across every long term (autumn, spring, and summer), and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and Local Authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Local Governing Body.

7.2 Analysing attendance data

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Attendance Support and Intervention

St Mary's C of E Primary School and Nursery monitors the attendance of all pupils regularly and will put in place varying levels of support and intervention as outlined below. The strategies, support and interventions put in place will vary depending on each pupil's attendance and the circumstances relating to their absence/s.

Through regular attendance monitoring and scrutiny, St Mary's is able to identify pupils that require support in relation to their attendance at the earliest possible stage.

| Attendance Stage | Strategies, Support, and Interventions |
|--|---|
| Monitoring Stage 96% to 100% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance monitored by class teacher Absences may be discussed upon return to school |
| Stage 1 91% to 95% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1 letter sent Support requests made to other services e.g. Behaviour & Attendance Panel, Student & Family Support (SAFS) Medical evidence requested, where appropriate Attendance support request submitted to the Attendance & Welfare Support Service Attendance Improvement Plan Attendance letters sent home to celebrate improved attendance Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence |
| Stage 2 50% to 90% Persistent Absence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 2 letter sent Support meeting and interventions as laid out in Stage 1 Multi-agency support Attendance Casework from the Attendance & Welfare Support Service Possible legal interventions for unauthorised absences |
| Stage 3 Below 50% Severe Absence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and interventions as laid out in Stage 2 Continued statutory intervention High risk of legal intervention for unauthorised absence |

The process outlined above is for guidance only. The strategies used to support attendance will vary depending on a child's circumstances, the reasons for their absence and their needs.

Early intervention and support is the most effective approach to improving attendance. Parents are strongly encouraged to engage with any support offered as this may improve attendance quickly and prevent the need for requests for support from statutory services.

While the use of statutory and legal interventions is always a last resort, they may be put in place by the Attendance & Welfare Support Service on behalf of the Local Authority.

9. Policy Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Champion) when guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years. At each review the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Body.

10. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

APPENDIX 1: KEY ATTENDANCE CONTACTS

| Role | Name | Contact details |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| School Absence reporting line | Mrs A Fenton | 01761 434548 office@stmaryswrithlington.co.uk |
| Headteacher/Lead for Attendance | Ms C Lampert | 01761 434548 clampert@stmaryswrithlington.co.uk |
| Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Miss B Hamblin | 01761 434548 bhamblin@stmaryswrithlington.co.uk |
| Nominated Attendance link governor | Mrs S Gilliam | sgilliam@stmaryswrithlington.co.uk |

The above can also be contacted via the school office by calling 01761 434548.

APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS USED ACROSS THE POLICY

In this policy key definitions are used. The meaning of these is provided below for ease of understanding.

Authorised absence means that your child is absent with the school's approval. Examples of authorised absence include: illness, medical treatment - including time spent in hospital, time a family needs during a crisis, and holidays under exceptional circumstances e.g. for service personnel returning from a posting abroad.

Unauthorised absence is avoidable absence i.e. when a child's education should be the priority and parents/carers choose for their child to miss school and the school, which shares responsibility for the child's education with parents, is not supportive of the absence. Examples of unauthorised absence include: family days-out; visiting relatives (in the UK or abroad); oversleeping, long weekends, holidays that overlap with the start or end of term, holidays taken in term time, attending weddings (including travel to and from these events) except for immediate family i.e. a parent or sibling.

Persistent absence

When a pupil's attendance figure drops to 90% or below, they are deemed as 'persistently absent' from school. Children whose attendance is below 90% are likely to achieve lower educational outcomes and are at increased risk of harm and exploitation. A pupil with 90% attendance will be absent for the equivalent of one session per week, six sessions per six-week term or 38 sessions per school year.

Severe absence

When a pupil is absent from school with an attendance figure of 50% or below, they are deemed as 'severely absent'. Children in this group are at increased risk of exploitation and education outcomes are poor. A pupil with 50% attendance will be absent for the equivalent of five sessions per week, 30 sessions per six-week term or 190 sessions per school year.

Parent

Within this policy a parent is defined as all natural parents whether they are married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person, and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

Vulnerable pupils

Within this policy vulnerable pupils are defined as those that have a social worker or have previously had a social worker; are a Child Looked After (CLA); have an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan); are severely absent as defined above.

Local Authority

Within this policy the Local Authority refers to Somerset County Council. From 1 April 2023, the Local Authority will refer to Somerset Council.

Session

Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day for all pupils. Each of these attendance marks counts for one session. Each day is made up of two sessions – morning and afternoon. In a typical school year, a pupil can attend for a maximum of 190 days or 380 sessions.

APPENDIX 3: ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or |

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------|--|
| | | replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |