



Attendance Policy 2024-2025: Summary for Parents

All schools are required to have a clear attendance policy following the new DfE guidance document 'Working together to Improve School Attendance'.

Why does attendance matter?



School gives children the life skills to prepare them for the future.

They make friends, learn about themselves and their bodies and how to build relationships

They learn fundamental skills in English &

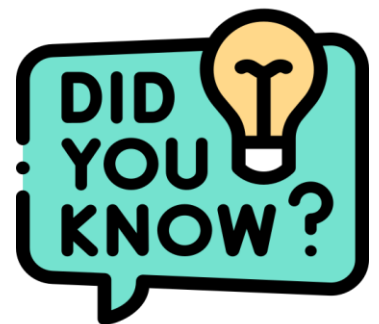
Maths as well as learning about the wider world.

We help them to grow in faith, grow in their learning and grow our future world.

When children miss school:

- * They **miss 5 lessons** per day. They then feel lost and confused when they return to school because they have missed key information and this gets worse given the length of absence. If a child misses **10 days of school** in a year, they are missing **50 lessons** and this causes significant gaps in their learning. Some topics are not repeated leading to **knowledge gaps** in subjects in future years.
- * They **miss out on fundamental reading, writing and maths skills** and are more likely to fall behind. Children with poor attendance are more likely to not be working at the expected level for their age. They are more likely to **underachieve** in their standard primary school tests and this continues to **impact** their GCSEs and **further education**.
- * They develop a **habit** of missing school which can be **difficult** to turn around.
- * They may struggle with **anxiety, their mental health, and wellbeing** as they struggle with the return to school.

All children have a legal right to a full-time education. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education.



Where parents decide to have their children registered at a school, **they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends the school regularly.** Therefore, we have 3 expectations for all children and families in our school:



Attend school daily
Attend school on time = 8.45am

Attend school ready and prepared to learn

****Uniform/PE kit** **water bottle/lunch box**
**** Reading diary******



The School Day - The doors open at **8.40am** each morning

The school day starts at **8.45am** and all children must be in their classrooms by this time ready for the register. **The school day ends at 3.15pm**

Reporting your child absent

It is the **parent/carer's responsibility** to inform the school when their child is absent. All parents **must call the school between 8am and 9am on 01761 434548** to report their child's non-attendance for **every day of absence**, and to explain the **reasons** for their absence.



Medical Appointments



All medical appointments should be made outside of school hours. On the rare occasion where this is not possible, for example a child needs to attend a specialist centre at a given time, **parents must complete a 'leave of absence' request.** A form for this can be collected from the school office. The child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Requesting Other Leaves of Absence in Advance

- * Headteachers can only grant leaves of absence in **exceptional** circumstances, **it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.**
- * In the **exceptional case** where families know in advance of a reason why their child may not be able to attend school, **they must request a 'Leave of Absence' form from the school office.** This must be **completed in its entirety**, detailing the reasons for the request of leave. **Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.**
- * If **granted**, it is for the Headteacher to decide the **length of time** a pupil can be away from school. Parents will be notified of this in **writing**.
- * If **rejected**, and parents decide to not bring their child to school **this absence will be marked as unauthorised**
- * **This could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.**

Fixed Penalty Notices

The law states that **if children of compulsory school age are absent from school without good reason they are committing an offence** and their parents or carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrate's Court. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be used when:**

- Regular **unauthorised absence** from school has occurred, **this can include being persistently late.**
- **One off instances of irregular attendance** where leave has been taken during term time without the permission of the school.
 - * This **includes unauthorised family holidays during term time.**
 - * If an unauthorised absence occurs for **more than 4 consecutive days**, a fixed penalty notice referral will be completed and a fine issued.

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority (BANES County Council)

Currently, the Fixed Penalty Notice for each child is £60 per parent.



How will the school work with families to improve attendance?



The diagram below outlines the key ways that staff will work with families when supporting them with attendance. When discussing attendance with families, staff will use this document to outline what next steps will happen to work with and support the child and the family.

Number of days absent	Attendance Percentage	Impact	School Actions
0-2 days absent in a school year	99% to 100%	<p>Attendance Levels are Excellent</p> <p>Your child is accessing all learning opportunities</p>	*Celebrate strong attendance
2.5-9 days absent in a school year	96% to 98%	<p>Attendance levels are Good</p> <p>Your child has missed very few learning opportunities</p>	* Annual updates for parents
9.5-17 days absent in a school year	93% to 95%	<p>Attendance levels are Unsatisfactory</p> <p>Your child is at risk of underachieving due to missed learning</p>	*Attendance letter sent home *Attendance monitored
18-25 days absent in a school year	90% to 92%	<p>Attendance levels are Poor</p> <p>Your child is at risk of high underachievement due to missed learning</p>	*Attendance letter sent home *Attendance support meeting for family *Check-in by member of staff * Identify support for pupil and family to improve attendance (include Attendance and Welfare Support Service)
Over 25 days absent in a school year	Below 90%	<p>Attendance levels are Inadequate</p> <p>Your child is at risk of serious underachievement and is now considered persistently absent</p>	*Attendance letter sent home *Attendance support meeting for family *Family allocated one member of staff to support with improving attendance * Daily check-in by member of staff *Family action plan to be considered if necessary *Referral to Attendance and Welfare Support Service for support

At St Mary's we aim to listen, understand and support our families but not tolerate high levels of absenteeism

To read our Attendance Policy in full, please see the website.