



St Mary Abbots Church of England Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2023-24

At St Mary Abbots School we grow little seeds into mighty trees. Our children's development is rooted in our Christian ethos and values. We ensure that our children experience learning of the highest standard and are nurtured to flourish in all things across the curriculum; as well as physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's [statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the [following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties](#) that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school on time on each school day.

The school day begins at 8.50am.

The register for the first session will be taken upon arrival to class. The register for the second session will be taken immediately after lunchtime.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence - for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health - by 9.00 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Please report your child/ren's absence to the school office by phone (leaving a voicemail if out of hours) or by emailing info@sma.rbkc.sch.uk

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents should call or email the school office in advance.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance to the Headteacher, and on an absence request form, sent to info@sma.rbkc.sch.uk. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The school office will follow up regular or unexplained lateness by calling the parents.

For persistent cases, the parents will receive a letter highlighting the issue and if there is no improvement, will be called in for a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The school office, and if needed a member of the Senior Leadership Team, will follow up regular or unexplained absence by calling the parents.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents receive an annual report on their child's attendance in the end-of-year report. The Headteacher also provides weekly, whole school information on absence in the newsletter.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments - as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Term-time holidays will not be approved.

St Mary Abbots identifies pupils of concern through regular monitoring of attendance. Those falling below 90% are referred to the Statutory Attendance Officer.

Absence two days before and two days after a half term or end of term holiday

We will not authorise absence as above for illness without evidence from a GP or an email or text message from a medical practitioner. We will not authorise absence for travel including flights booked two days or the day before a school holiday.

Children in entertainment

The general rule is that no child may take part in a performance unless licensed to do so by the local authority in whose area he or she lives. Even with a license, it is up to the Headteacher whether or not to authorise the absence. Licenses are granted where the local authority is satisfied about the child's fitness and about provisions made for his or her health, treatment and education. If the school is concerned that having a license will be detrimental to the education of the child, a license will not be granted by the Local Authority. If the application for a licence is made by parents of children whose attendance is below 95% the Headteacher may refuse the licence. The school attendance of children in entertainment is closely monitored.

Exams/Interviews/Secondary school/transfer to another school

We are permitted to authorise half a day's absence for your child to visit another school, take an ~~exam or attend an interview.~~ If you need a whole day you will need to email the Headteacher via info@sma.rbkc.sch.uk and provide evidence of the need to request a whole day's absence.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. St Mary Abbots will consider fining parents for unauthorised absence as follows:

If issued with a penalty notice, parents 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 ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may include:

A 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

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

In the event of more than five consecutive days unauthorised absence/holiday, the school may inform the Statutory Attendance Officer.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

St Mary Abbots promotes good attendance by rewarding those with 100% attendance, with certificates each half term. We also use individual and class prizes.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Administrative Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call or email the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health and explain the reason why (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to contact the school on each day of the child's absence.

If we are unable to contact a parent to discuss their child's absence, or if we have any concerns relating to it, we may contact the Statutory Attendance Officer or refer to Children's Service.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving Early Help or the Statutory Attendance Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected and published regularly 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school tracks attendance data to check for trends. Particular groups or individuals may be tracked where the school has concerns and it monitors and evaluates the impact of the absence on progress. Interventions may be planned as a result.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 Administrative staff

Administrative staff will:

Take calls/emails from parents about absence and record it on the school system

Monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

Report concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Work with the headteacher/senior leaders and outside agencies such as the Statutory Attendance Officer to tackle persistent absence

Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

EQUALITIES

St Mary Abbots School positively celebrates diversity and inclusion is core to its Christian ethos. The Governing Body recognises that no one should receive less favourable unlawful treatment than another on the grounds of gender, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. It is the Governors' aim that no-one at the School should suffer unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any of these grounds. The Governing Body is committed to embedding fairness and equality at the heart of the school community, and in all aspects of the school's policies, procedures and practices.

**Approved by the Full Governing Body:
Review Date**

**October 2023
October 2024**

Appendix 1: 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
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
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
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
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

APPENDIX 2

LATE NON-COLLECTION POLICY

We aim to provide a safe and caring environment. In the event that a child is not collected or collection is delayed, they will be reassured in order to cause as little distress as possible. In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we put into practice the agreed procedures, unless agreement to walk home alone has been obtained.

Late Collection

- Parents of the children starting school are required to provide specific information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents or the persons authorised to collect the child are not able to do so, such as the child visiting a child's house after school or attending an after-school club, they should inform the school office of the names of the person collecting their child. If circumstances change during the day, please inform the school office.
- In the event that the parent/carer is running late or has made alternative collection with a friend/relative they should contact the school office to advise us of those changes so that we are aware.
- If no alternative arrangements have been made, the child will be placed into afterschool club and the parent will be charged for the session.

Non-Collection

If it appears that there have been no alternative arrangements made for the collection of a child by the parent/carer, the school staff will take the following steps:

- Staff will attempt to phone the parents/carers provided on the child's record.
- Staff will attempt to contact any other adults identified as emergency contacts on record.
- All reasonable attempts will be made to contact the parents or nominated carers or emergency contacts.
- The child will not be permitted to leave the premises with anyone other than those we hold on record or an adult who the parents have informed school has permission to collect the child.
- Under no circumstances will staff look for the parent, nor will they take the child home with them. If there has been no contact made, or if there are no staff available on the premises, the school will telephone the police and give the child's details i.e. name, DOB, address, names of parents/carer's and any other contact details.
- The police are likely to complete a home visit and/or undertake basic enquiries in order to locate the child's parents/carers.
- If the police cannot locate an appropriate adult to come for the child, they will notify Children's Services via the emergency duty team, who will arrange for the child to be cared for, possibly with foster carers.

The police may decide to take the police protection order (PPO) as part of this process.

- The Headteacher will discuss the incident with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity in order to address the issue and prevent any further incidents.
- If there are two or more such episodes within a six-week period, staff will make a referral to Children's Services.