St Mark's CE Primary School

Ramslye Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN4 8LN

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Headteacher: Simon Bird
Chair of Governors: David Hill

Our Vision

*St Mark's CEP School is committed to developing children that are flourishing, building strong foundations, making excellent all-round progress and reaching their potential.
We Aspire, Believe, Succeed.*

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Website y/n

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:

> 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

It also refers to:

> School census guidance

> Keeping Children Safe in Education

> Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board 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

> Safeguarding Governors: Jenny Gray and Hester Gudmunsen cover attendance concerns such as persistent absences

3.2 The 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

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

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

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

> Creating intervention re-integration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rachel Crane who can be contacted via r.crane@st-marks.kent.sch   01892 525402

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

> Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs C Chapman and can be contacted via 01892 525402 or office@st-marks.kent.sch.uk

3.5 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 class registers to be completed by 9.05am and again at 1pm.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

> Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Voice messages will be listened to regarding attendance and recorded

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on each day of the absence and each and advise when they are expected to return. Parents are asked to provide a reason for the absence and documentation regarding medical appointments.

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register 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 amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

Notification can be made by telephone call, email and messages left on the absence reporting extension on the telephone system. We will mark absence due to physical as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are persistent absence concerns or an absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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/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.

Parents should notify the school office in advance by either telephone call, email or in person. 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 and provide school with appointment cards/texts/emails/letters.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out 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

Attendance, including punctuality, is monitored termly and any concerns raised are addressed.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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 day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will send an email in the first instance. If the welfare of a child is a concern and contact from parents is not made then the school may – carry out a welfare check (FLO, DSL) or contact the Police and ask for a welfare check.

> 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 absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels (for example, via mid year and end of year written reports as well as when a child's attendance drops below 90%).

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as death of an immediate family member eg child's sibling, parent or grandparent or a religious festival/event eg Eid
The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> 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

> 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is recognized each week in celebration assembly. Classes with the best attendance and punctuality are rewarded with extra playtime. This information is shared via the weekly newsletter.

Meetings are requested with parents whose children's attendance is a concern in order to work together to resolve these issues. Help such as breakfast club, school nurse or Early help will be offered. Support from the schools Family Liaison officer will also be offered. School also acknowledges when these families have improved their attendance as a result of this intervention.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:
- Monitor attendance and absence data termly (6x year) 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 governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

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 weekly attendance reports to 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/carers of pupils who the school 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

> Offer a wide range of procedures (see appendix 2) to support improving attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Attendance officer/Lead DSL. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

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 (after 9.05 and before 9.15am)	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 within 5 days)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after 9.15am	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

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION CHECK LIST

Child's Name:

....

Class:

....

Breakfast Club Offered	
School Nurse referral	
Early Help referral	
1:1 Adult Support for child	
Nurture Group	
Family Liaison Officer	
Outreach collections	
Home Visit	
Attendance warning letter	
Attendance meeting with parent	
Parent meeting with class teacher	
Parent meeting with SENCo	
Young Carers	
Youth Hub	