

Headteachers:
Mrs M. Adams MA
Mrs M. Constantinou BEd



Littlegrove, East Barnet, Herts EN4 8SR
t: 020 8449 5856
e: office@stmarysen4.barnetmail.net
www.stmarysen4-barnet.co.uk



**Church of England
Primary School**

Attendance Policy

VISION

At St. Mary's, inspired by Christian values, we are excited by our learning, proud of our achievements, determined to be the best we can be and caring for all God's creations.

VISION IN CHILD SPEAK

I am inspired by Christian values, excited about my learning, proud of my achievements, determined to be the best I can be, caring for all of God's creations.

MISSION

- **With St Mary's Church, Brookside Methodist, and other local churches, we will further develop understanding of gospel values in action through worship and across the curriculum**
- **Through excellent teaching we will deliver an inspirational curriculum**
- **We will enable every child to make the very best progress**
- **We will work in partnership with children and families to further promote confidence and self esteem**
- **We will prepare children to confidently face the challenges of growing up in the 21st Century**
- **We will provide children with an understanding of local, national and global communities and faiths.**

Safeguarding Statement of Intent

St Marys Church of England Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by or invited to deliver services at the school. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

St Marys Church of England Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people through rigorous application of Safer Recruitment processes. All applications for staff positions in the school are thoroughly vetted in accordance with policy. DBS checks are undertaken for all staff and for volunteers who work on a regular basis in school.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

The Education Act 1996 states that:

S.576: "Meaning of "parent". In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) who has care of him."

S.7: "Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

S.444: "Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

1.5 The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

1.6 There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with Headteacher as part of the monitoring and review process.

1.7 The Headteacher and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body's objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

1.8 School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality and enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

1.9 Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

1.10 Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

1.11 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

2. ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING GOOD ATTENDANCE

2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with dignity and respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

2.3 All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

2.4 Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and if relevant at Parent Consultations.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE

3.1 The school will consider annually, in accordance with its support needs in relation to attendance, whether it wishes to purchase a Traded Service from the Education Welfare Team.

3.2 The school will log conversations with parents about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

3.3 In accordance with the law, staff take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

3.4 To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, eg. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

3.5 Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.

3.6 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the Administrative Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

3.7 Attendance data is held electronically on separate Information Management Information System, accessible by the Head teacher and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

3.8 The Headteacher and Administrative Staff monitor the attendance of pupils each half term.

3.9 Returns of school data are made termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

4. PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

4.1 It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. The Headteacher and Administrative Staff monitor lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

4.2 The school gate entrance is open from 8.40am in the morning to allow children and parents into the playground before the school day starts. From 8.45am, members of staff stand at the outer and inner school gates to welcome pupils and monitor entry to and safety on the playground. Other staff are also on duty supervising children. We ask that parents do not leave their children on the playground until a member of staff is present and on duty.

Registration is called at 8.55am and again after lunch for all classes. Registers will close at ten minutes after registration times. Children arriving late should go via the school office be given a 'yellow slip' which should be handed to their teacher to show they have been registered in the office. Where a child arrives after 9.15am, this late arrival will be counted as an unauthorised absence as 20 or more minutes have been lost from learning time.

4.3 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Head teacher will write to the parents/carers stating the number of 'lates' over a determined period.

4.4 If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to Education Welfare Office.

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

5.1 The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance and it is a requirement for the Head of School to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Head of School.

5.2 Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

5.3 If a child is absent from school for any reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible of absence and reason for it. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

5.4 Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Leave of Absence

6.1 The Government issued regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence;

6.2 Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

6.3 Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

6.4 Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

6.5 The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

6.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

6.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

6.8 The Education Welfare Office have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with Local Authority policy.

6.9 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to London Borough of Barnet’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996. Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

6.10 It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totaling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

7. WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

8. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

8.1 Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Barnet Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 02083594066.

8.2 Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

8.3 All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil’s file

9. IN CONCLUSION

9.1 It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child’s progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school’s success.

Policy dated: December 2019

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