



St Matthew's Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2015

ST MATTHEW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE

Rationale

Good attendance and punctuality are central to achieving the best from the education available at school.

School attendance is subject to a legal framework.

Families, the school and the Education Welfare Service all have a part to play in establishing and maintaining good levels of attendance for all pupils. Through working in partnership we can achieve our best for the pupils.

Purpose

This policy sets out clearly the role and responsibilities of families, the school and the Education Welfare Service as well as this school's systems for monitoring attendance and recognising excellent attendance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of families

Parents¹ are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at school at the required times.

The parent is primarily responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. However, where school attendance problems occur, the key to resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the parent, the school and the local authority.

Parents should:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly
- Ensure they are punctual for school
- Ensure they are appropriately dressed and in a condition ready to learn
- Comply with the Attendance Policy of our school
- Make sure their child understands the reasons for good attendance and punctuality
- Make sure appointments are made outside of school hours wherever possible and show evidence of the appointment when it is not
- Notify the school on the first day of absence when their child is absent
- Follow the procedure for term time holidays
- Only allow absence from school for legitimate reasons
- Work in partnership with the school

¹ The term 'parent' includes those who have parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act 1989 and as defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. The latter gives 'parental responsibility' to those who may not be the child's actual parents but have day to day care of the child.

Responsibilities of schools

The school will:

- Have a registration system that is accurate, informative and understood
- Analyse data regularly and identify any actions that need to be taken
- Follow up unexplained absences promptly
- Ensure that attendance and punctuality have a high profile in communications with parents
- Have clear written guidance for parents
- Promote good attendance and punctuality for all
- Work in partnership with families and the Education Welfare Service
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy
- Inform parents of their child's attendance regularly during the school year

The school systems are maintained by an Attendance Officer. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy.

Responsibilities of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will:

- Monitor registers regularly
- Identify pupils/families with attendance difficulties
- Agree time limited action which needs to be taken by the school or Education Welfare Officer
- Feedback on the progress of cases and exchange of information
- Issue Penalty Notices where applicable
- Provide advice to the school
- Work in partnership with the school and families

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Timing of the school day:

	Start	Register taken	Register closes	Session ends
Morning				
Foundation Stage	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	11.30
Key Stage 1				
Year 1	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.00
Year 2	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.15
Key Stage 2				
Year 3	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	11.45
Year 4	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.00
Year 5	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.30
Year 6	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.15
Afternoon				
Foundation Stage	12.30	12.35	12.40	3.20
Key Stage 1				

Year 1	1.00	1.05	1.10	3.20
Year 2	1.15	1.20	1.25	3.20
Key Stage 2				
Year 3	12.45	12.50	12.55	3.25
Year 4	1.00	1.05	1.10	3.25
Year 5	1.30	1.35	1.40	3.25
Year 6	1.15	1.20	1.25	3.25

Doors open at 8.45am, which enables a calm beginning to the day. We would prefer that all children are brought to and from school by an adult. Where this is not possible we require a signed letter from the parent stating they accept responsibility for their child's safety.

Registers are taken at the beginning of each session, therefore there are two marks for each day, one in the morning and one after lunch.
The school follows the Local Authority's registration regulations.

Guidelines for marking registers are shown in Appendix 1.

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important at the beginning and end of the school day. It is expected that children arrive or are brought to school on time and are collected on time. The register is taken at 8.55 prompt in all classes. Any children arriving after the registers are done, but before 9.05, are marked late, shown with an L in the register. Children who arrive after 9.05 are marked U in the register, the reason for lateness formally recorded and no attendance mark for the session is given. This will affect a child's overall attendance percentage, which is monitored along with lateness and if patterns of poor punctuality emerge action will be taken.

Absence from school

Children must be present at both registrations to get full attendance for the day. Absence can be recorded as authorised or unauthorised:

- **Authorised**
Absence for which a valid reason has been given e.g. illness, medical appointment (appointment card seen)
- **Unauthorised**
Absence for which an invalid reason has been given e.g. shopping, visiting relatives, birthday etc

When a child is absent a parent or carer, needs to inform the school on the first day of absence, preferably by a telephone call.

If no notification of absence is given the Attendance Officer will contact the family during the first day of absence.

If a child needs to attend a medical appointment during the school day a parent or carer, should inform the school in advance and show the letter or appointment card as evidence.

Where no contact can be made with the family or absence is prolonged the Attendance Officer will refer the case to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

This procedure is shown in Appendix 2.

The Educational Welfare Officer is able to issue Penalty Notices to those families where unauthorised absence exceeds 4 days (8 sessions).

Religious observance

Under the regulations, schools must authorise absence that is due to religious observance but that leave must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body.

Term time leave

Due to a change in the Education Regulations by the Department for Education term time leave is no longer authorised. This means all unauthorised absences of 5 days or more will automatically result in a £60 fine per child, per adult at the home address. In exceptional circumstances the Headteacher may authorise leave.

Monitoring attendance

Attendance is monitored regularly.

- The Attendance Officer telephones families whose child is absent on the first day of absence when no reason has previously been given
- Teachers must inform the Headteacher when they notice patterns of absence
- The Headteacher analyses pupil attendance each term and takes follow up action when attendance is poor or patterns are noticed
- The EWO checks the registers every six weeks and identifies pupils with attendance of 90% and below and those with irregular attendance and poor punctuality
- The governors are informed of attendance analyses and returns at least annually

The Attendance Monitoring file is kept in the Attendance Officer's work space.

Reporting attendance

To Parents

Three times each year (November, January and May) families will receive a report showing the percentage figures for their child/children's attendance and punctuality. The Attendance Officer produces attendance reports from SIMS Attendance Module. The report informs parents of the percentage expected and where there might be cause for concern. Parents are able to make an appointment with the Headteacher or a representative of the school to discuss any concerns they have.

Parents are given information about whole school attendance in newsletters as appropriate.

To the Education Welfare Service

The Attendance Officer provides a print out of those children with attendance at 95% and below, to assist the Education Welfare Officer with their register check.

To the Governing Body

The Headteacher's report includes an attendance update each term.

Promoting and rewarding good attendance

Weekly

The class with the best attendance in each year group receives a certificate.

Each class that achieves the following percentages receives:

98%	extra Golden Time
99%	10p to spend on the sweet trolley
100%	15p to spend on the sweet trolley

Termly

Children with 99% & 100% attendance for the term receive a certificate in assembly and have their name displayed on the school website.

Annually

Children with 100% attendance for the whole school year receive a certificate and a trophy at the annual presentation evening/assembly to which the family are invited. The children are also invited to take part in a trip; this may be to a local bowling alley or to a private screening at the cinema.

The rewards system is regularly reviewed and amended to continue to encourage good attendance particularly for poor attendees.

Improving poor attendance and punctuality

The regular monitoring and analysis of school registers enables patterns and trends to be identified.

Step 1

Where poor attendance or punctuality is identified during the Headteacher or Education Welfare Officer's monitoring the parent is written to and advised that their child's attendance will be monitored the following term. Parents/carers are able to meet with the Headteacher to discuss this.

Step 2

Where the concern persists, school Family Workers invite parents/carers to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absence or punctuality difficulties. The purpose of this meeting is to plan for improvement. The Headteacher will continue to monitor the child's attendance each week.

Step 3

Where no improvement has been made the Headteacher will invite the parents/carers to a meeting. If no improvement is made the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

The aim throughout this process is to ensure all children have the best attendance possible. The school will work in partnership with parents/carers and will take into account individual circumstances, applying the process accordingly.

A visit to families at home will be arranged if necessary.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The policy and associated guidance will be discussed with staff and governors. Families will be informed of the attendance procedures via the school induction meetings and newsletters.

This policy was ratified by governors on 28th September 2015

It will be reviewed in 2 years or sooner if regulations change.

Luton Education Welfare Service
Absence for Religious Observance
Guidance for Schools

The Legal Position

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that schools must authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the day must be:

- Exclusively set apart for religious observance; and
- Set apart by the parents' religious body (not the parents themselves)

If the religious body sets apart a single day for religious observance and the parents ask for 4 days leave of absence, the school is only required to allow one day. The rest is discretionary leave. All requests for discretionary leave must be made in advance.

Our Advice

In most cases that affect us in Luton, eg Eid, one day will be authorised and coded R.

Any additional days will have to be requested in advance, and a reason for the request provided. It is then up to schools to decide whether the request is reasonable and should be granted. Any further days agreed would then be coded C.

Any further days that pupils take that have not been authorised by the school, either because they were not requested in advance or were turned down on request, will be marked as unauthorised absences. And schools should not authorise extra days retrospectively.

Examples where it would not be appropriate to authorise further days:

- To do shopping prior to the religious observance day
- To prepare food etc for the day
- To recover after the festivities
- To pick up/drop off relatives at the airport

Examples where schools may decide to authorise further days:

- Where families are travelling to see or stay with relatives in another part of the country.

As with all authorised absence, schools should look at the individual circumstances rather than have a blanket policy.

It may also be appropriate to consider the child's attendance record in deciding whether or not to authorise further absences.

Appendix 1 - Registration Guidelines

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each session.

	Start	Register taken	Register closes	Session ends
Morning				
Foundation Stage	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	11.30
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Year 4	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.00
Year 5	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.30
Year 6	8.50	8.55 – 9.00	9.05	12.15
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Year 2	1.15	1.20	1.25	3.20
Key Stage 2				
Year 3	12.45	12.50	12.55	3.25
Year 4	1.00	1.05	1.10	3.25
Year 5	1.30	1.35	1.40	3.25
Year 6	1.15	1.20	1.25	3.25

Only mark in the children who are present in the class, all other pupils are absent. Please ensure that late arrivals report to the school office. The attendance officer will record reasons for absence and lateness on the computer system. All notes or messages about absence should be sent to the office.

APPENDIX 2 – Procedure for when a child is absent.

