St Martin's C of E (VA) Primary School

Attendance policy

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Contents

1. Aims 2
2. Legislation and guidance 2
3. Roles and responsibilities 2
4. Recording attendance 5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence 7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance 8
7. Attendance monitoring 8
8. Monitoring arrangements 9
9. Links with other policies 9
Appendix 1: attendance codes 9

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1. Aims

At St Martin's, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regard 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.

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body 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

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

Referring absences for fixed-penalty notices, where applicable

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

Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Arranging targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher, who can be contacted via 01759368446 or email at fangfossprimary@eastriding.gov.uk.

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 thresholds for fixed-penalty notices have been met

The attendance officer is Pauline Snell and she can be contacted via 01759 368446 or email at fangfossprimary@eastriding.gov.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 in the morning and after lunch every day.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

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

Transfer calls or emails from parents to the Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

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 9:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

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 use SIMS to record attendance.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning of each school day and at the start of the afternoon. 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 be made by office staff and will include a note to state:

What the original entry was, what it was changed to, who provided the information and when.

The initials of the person who made 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 0845 on each school day.

The register for the morning will be taken at 0845 and will be kept open until 0915. The register for the afternoon will be taken at 1:10 and will be kept open until 1:40. Pupils arriving to the school after the close of the register will be marked as code U, unauthorised absence after registration has closed. Patterns of late attendance or unauthorised absence will be investigated and may be referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer.

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 9:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7). This should happen on each subsequent day of illness, unless circumstances mean that a certain period at home is required.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/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.

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.

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 an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code

The school will monitor lateness and contact parents if this becomes a concern

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:

Text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If no response is received, this will be followed up with a phone call. If there is no response, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised

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 and conduct home visits where neccessary to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken as appropriate. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and at the end of every year a written report will be provided.

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 those defined in the ERYC 'Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Policy. Namely:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Head teacher agrees to consult with the Principal Education Welfare Officer prior to any authorization being given to the parent.

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 1 week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. 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 – 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
- 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 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 must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days per child. 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 will 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

Establish attendance as a high priority

Applying the attendance policy consistently

Monitoring attendance and reporting to governors regularly

Encouraging punctuality

Discouraging term time holidays

Informing parents of school times, term dates and INSET days

Having clear procedures for parents to inform staff of pupil absence or lateness

Liaising with the Education Welfare Service

Working in partnership with the Education Welfare Service, Behavioural Support Service and parents

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly 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 regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other 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
- Write to parents when absence becomes a concern.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) 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

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Headteacher. 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	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
K	Education Provision	Pupil is at an educational provision activity arranged by the LA.
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