



Attendance Policy December 2024

Approved by the Board: 4.12.2024

To be reviewed: August 2027

Signed:

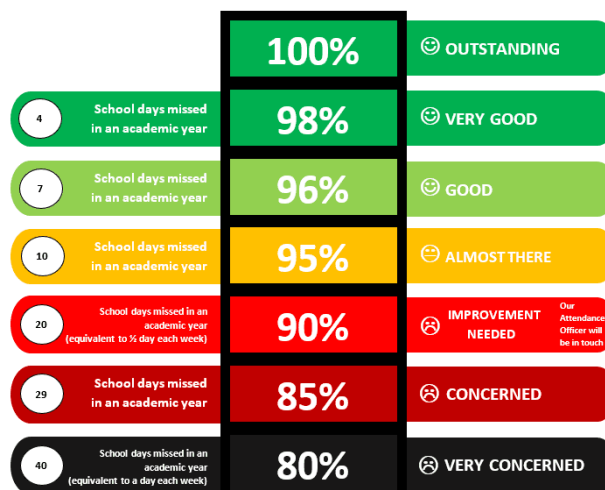
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Introduction

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school. At St Mary's C of E Primary School, we believe that it is in the best interest of every child, for their intellectual, social, physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual development, to attend school every day. However, we also recognise that there are sometimes circumstances in which attendance may not be possible. In these cases, we would apply an individualised approach.

Learning is a complex process in which knowledge, skills and understanding are developed and built on systematically.

Interruptions to this process can lead to gaps in a child's knowledge and understanding, missed stages in the acquisition of a new skill and lost opportunities to share in and grow from new experiences. For this reason, and to ensure the safety of all our pupils, we aspire to a 100% attendance record for every child, and we will request an explanation for every absence.



Procedures for Monitoring Attendance

To encourage 100% attendance, we have adopted the following monitoring procedures

- Parents/carers are requested to notify the school of their child's absence in advance whenever possible, or before the start of the first session.
- If notification of absence has not been received then the school will endeavour to make contact on the first day, to ascertain the reason. This will usually be done by the school text service, phone calls home or email.
- Frequent absence or patterns of absence which might significantly affect learning will be closely monitored, even if such absence is authorised.
- Letters will be sent to families where attendance is a concern and drops below the school target of 95% and parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Attendance Lead to discuss ways to resolve the concern.
- We will work in conjunction with the local authority and Attendance professionals and may refer pupils whose absence is a matter of concern, below 85%. In such cases we will notify parents of our intention and will work together to improve attendance.
- Levels of both authorised and unauthorised absence will be included in pupils' annual report to parents. This is calculated on the basis that there are two registration lessons per day; 10 per week.
- Explanations for absence will only be accepted from an adult with legal responsibility for the child, not by the child or a sibling.
- Half Termly Attendance newsletters will be issued reminding parents of the

- school's policy and a summary will be provided in the school's prospectus.
- Correspondence relating to holiday requests will be filed in the school office.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

When new parents or carers visit or are introduced to the school, good attendance and punctuality is raised and parents and carers are made aware of how the school will work to address issues.

Parents, carers and pupils are asked to keep absence to a minimum.

We ask all parents and carers to inform the school of any absences by a telephone call, note or email message on the first day of absence so that the school is immediately aware of the reason for the child's absence. This can be emailed to office@st-maryscofe.leics.sch.uk

As a school, we highlight the impact good attendance can have on a child and the DfE guidelines are explained; it is made clear that it is the school that has the responsibility of authorising absence, not the parent or carer. Reminders of this are shared regularly on school newsletters and on an annual basis in our parent and carer 'Introduction to the Year' meetings.

Monitoring and Improving Attendance

Teachers are encouraged to monitor attendance as it is often they who first pick up signs of poor attendance or absence patterns. When this is the case, they should share their concerns with Attendance Officer/team in school.

The Attendance Officer/team, monitors the registers regularly during the week and will identify any pupils who are absent with no letter, phone call or email message to explain the reason for that absence. An attempt will then be made to contact the parent or carer on the first day of absence. If no contact can be made, a safeguarding home visit will be made to check that all is well with the family. If no-one is home or no contact is made after 2 days of absence, a referral will be made to the appropriate agencies such as Social Care, Education Welfare or if necessary the Police.

The following methods may be used to monitor and improve attendance:

- Discussion at parents' and carers' evenings regarding the child's attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality reminders in newsletters.
- A series of standard letters if attendance or punctuality become erratic or low.
- Solution-focused discussions with children, parents and carers about issues causing low attendance.
- Attendance targets incorporated into end of year school reports.
- Regular monthly meetings with the Rise Attendance Lead (more meetings will be scheduled if required).
- Annual meeting with the Rise Attendance Lead to evaluate progress and draw up targets for the following year.

Encouraging full attendance

To encourage full attendance and to emphasise the importance we attach to school attendance we will recognise and congratulate those pupils who achieve 100% attendance or who show significant improvement in attendance.

- Class attendance is monitored weekly and read out in assembly certificate awarded to the class with the highest attendance
- Class attendance for each week is shared with parents/guardians in the weekly Friday Flyer newsletter

Serious problems relating to non-attendance and punctuality

- Where children are persistently late after the register has closed, this may be classed as an unauthorised absence. The school will work closely with the Rise Attendance Lead to address these problems and to improve children's attendance rate. If there is no improvement, after 20 unauthorised sessions, a penalty notice may be issued. Further details on the law and attendance are included in appendix A of this policy.
- A copy of this policy is made available to parents and carers and can be accessed via the school website

Parental Responsibilities

Parents and those with parental responsibilities are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. This means that they are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. They are also responsible for informing the school, stating the reason for the absence and wherever possible indicating when the child is expected to return. Details of legislation, including the issue of Penalty Notices for non/poor attendance, can be found here [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Registration

Pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Morning registration will close 15 minutes after the register has been taken and afternoon registration at 1.05pm. Pupils arriving after registration has closed will be marked 'U' on the register; this mark counts as an absence for the purposes of calculating overall attendance. Coding is decided by the school attendance staff. The 'U' code will only be used at the discretion of the attendance staff. (Appendix B) The Rise Attendance Lead may also be consulted. When children arrive late, before the register has closed, an "L" will be used to indicate they are late. The Attendance Officer/Team monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness in 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. Children who are regularly late for school with no valid reason will not be eligible to achieve 100% attendance. Absences are registered authorised or unauthorised according to agreed LA/DFE criteria.

Registers are kept accurately as they may be used as evidence in cases where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences.

| Year Group | Start & Collection time |
|------------|-------------------------|
| EYFS | 8.50 - 3.20 |
| Year 1 | 8.50 - 3.20 |
| Year 2 | 8.50 - 3.20 |
| Year 3 | 8.50 - 3.20 |
| Year 4 | 8.50 - 3.20 |
| Year 5 | 8.50 - 3.20 |
| Year 6 | 8.50 - 3.20 |

Categorising absence

Parents can be prosecuted for failing to ensure that their children attend school with the following exceptions:

- The pupil was absent with permission from an authorised person within the school.
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.

- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious group to which the family belongs.
- The school is not within walking distance of the home and no suitable arrangements have been made for transport to school, boarding accommodation or enabling the child to be registered at a school nearer home
- Medical and dental appointments – such absences will be authorised providing the school is satisfied that such appointments are genuine. However, we would ask all parents, wherever possible to make non-emergency appointments outside of school hours
- Family holiday and extended trips overseas: Only in exceptional circumstances will authorisation be granted for an absence. Parents will be discouraged from taking children out of school at particularly crucial points in the school year, for example, during the annual statutory assessments at Year 6.
- Leave of absence may be authorised for a child to take part in a public performance at the school's discretion.
- Leave of absence may be authorised for off-site activities whether school directed e.g., educational visits, or individual e.g., music examinations.
- Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded but remains on the school roll their absence will be registered as authorised.
- There may be occasions when pupils are absent due to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, for example, family bereavement. We will endeavour to deal sensitively with requests for absence in such instances.
- Additional exceptions may be made for children from a traveller heritage, details of which may be obtained from the LA (Local Authority).

Leave of absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational, or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. 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
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period
- In line with the updated statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance,' which came into force on 19th August 2024, fixed penalty notices may be issued by the school for unauthorised absences as outlined in appendix A of this policy.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the period set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Local Authorities 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.

St Mary's C of E Primary School understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time, but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance. Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays.

Notification of levels of attendance/absence

We have a legal duty to provide information on levels of attendance, and levels of authorised and unauthorised absence. This information is required by the LA and the DFE. We set target attendance levels, and these will be set by the governing body in line with statutory requirements. The Head Teacher reports on attendance and levels of authorised and unauthorised absence to the local governing body at each meeting.

St Mary's C of E Primary School *is now required to make a sickness return to the Local Authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the I code (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have missed 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

****(Working together to improve school attendance Aug 2024)***

The Rise Attendance Lead

Parents and carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together, which we have found to be highly successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer poor levels of attendance to the Rise Attendance Lead from the Rise Academy Trust. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement with parents and carers. However, if attempts to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court may be enforced.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the Attendance Lead themselves to ask for help or information. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

Children Absent from Education

A Child absent from Education forms part of the wider safeguarding procedures for children who are regularly absent from school. A pupil absent from education on a number of occasions is a potential indicator of the following: -

- abuse and neglect
- Child sexual and criminal exploitation
- DA/DV
- County Lines

Should a pupil be regularly absent from St Mary's C of E Primary School, The Rise Attendance Lead, Mrs Karen Harvey, will make enquiries directly with the family concerned. Should these enquiries not reach a satisfactory conclusion, then further enquiries will be made with Social Care and or the Police.

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, if a child is no longer coming to our school where the parent or carer has removed them, we will ensure that appropriate steps are taken and measures are in place i.e. we will follow our school guidelines in monitoring those parents or carers home tutoring, follow procedures where a child is taken out of school to go on holiday or where a child is removed from school as the family are moving away. We will notify all relevant partner agencies/services including Education Welfare, correct forms will be completed, information will be recorded and child folders/information will be passed on to the appropriate person (where applicable).

Policy Links

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following other policies and documents:

- Collection Protocol
- Home Visits Protocol
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Appendix A

Penalty Notice Fines for School Absence are changing

With the introduction of the new National Framework for penalty notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice fines issued for unauthorised absence that occurs after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time learning leave will result in **each** parent receiving 3 **separate** fines

5 Consecutive Days of Term Time Learning Leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time learning leave of 5 or more consecutive days and for fewer days where this has happened before.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Learning Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of **absence in a 10-week period**

Sessions equal to AM & PM

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Learning Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

There is NO option to pay at £80 level

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Learning Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in a Magistrates' Court can show on the parents future DBS certificate and may impact on job applications and travel abroad.

Court Prosecutions

Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued.

Parents are advised that where the Local Authority considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken.

BY LAW, ALL PENALTY NOTICE PAYMENTS GO TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND NOT TO SCHOOLS

Further guidance is available on the Gov.uk website.

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2024/08/19/penalty-notice-fines-for-school-absence-are-changing/)

Appendix B

The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|--|--|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad (includes leave supported by a LA licence) | Authorised Absence |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory pupil subject to a part-time timetable | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | <i>Not counted in possible attendances</i> |
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J1 | Interview | Authorised absence |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| K | Attending education Provision arranged by the LA | Approved Education Activity |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| Q | Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements | Not counted in possible attendances |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U* | Late (after registers closed no longer than 30 Minutes) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to provided transport not being available | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | school closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

*Coding is decided by the school attendance staff. The 'U' code will only be used at the discretion of the attendance staff. The Rise Attendance Lead may also be consulted. If you would like a copy of your child's attendance record at any point, please ask at the school office.

Appendix C

Children from Traveller Communities

Traveller children of compulsory school age are expected by law* to attend at least 200 sessions out of the possible 380 sessions per school academic year. The use of the Traveller code (T) for more than 180 sessions could indicate that the pupil has failed to meet this requirement. Please note that absence for travelling purposes should only be coded "T" when the parent is engaged in trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. If this is not the case, the child is required to be in school as usual.

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

It is important that there is consistency between schools in relation to the approach to the absence of Traveller children and this school therefore adopts this policy.

The attendance of children from travelling families is treated with equity and fairness taking into account the cultural needs of our Traveller community; the culture of travelling families can require travel for genuine work purposes and is recognised nationally.

However, it has also been recognised that Traveller children's attendance tends to be very low and can result in significant problems with achievement, attainment and whole school attendance performance management.

Of particular importance is:

- a) The coding of the absence of Traveller pupils in schools
- b) Movement among Traveller families; children may leave and return at the parents' will and at very short notice, with no indication of the whereabouts of a child and/or his/her welfare
- c) This in turn makes it difficult for the school to exercise the duty of care to children and to provide a good education to each and every one of our pupils. It is important that the school is able to monitor, assess and review children's development and to ensure that children are progressing.

Whilst respecting the need for traveller families to conduct their day to day businesses, it is important for everyone to work together to maximise the opportunity for all children to achieve and attain through improving attendance and punctuality in school. Traveller families are therefore subject to the same limitations and constraints in regulation as all other families albeit with discretion where travel is for business purposes.

Traveller families will be requested to complete a Traveller Request Form before a child's period of absence from school commences where travel is for business purposes and/or the child will be accessing education in another location. Requests for absence of any other nature should be made using the schools leave of absence request form.

Information is available from the school office.

Please note the following:

Absence linked to travel for the reasons listed below will not constitute travel for work purposes. The school must conform with regulations to provide equality for all pupils and set the foundations for a fair Attendance Policy for the whole school population:

1. Bereavement
2. Weddings
3. Visiting Relatives
4. Absence the family feel is religious observance where this is in excess of 1 day exclusively set apart by the religious body
5. Pre-wedding preparations and weddings
6. Birthdays

Where a family does not inform the school or seek permission for absence before departure, the absence will not be authorised.

Traveller Pupil Tracking Form - Guidance

The purpose of the form is to record the proposed leave of pupils from the travelling communities, recording details of their local residence and their current contact numbers. The purpose of the form is also to record information about intended travel dates and the expected date of return. If the family is staying on a Local Authority site in another area of the country, the details can be recorded and confirmed.

If the student is dual registered with a school outside of the local authority, this information should be confirmed and the dual registration procedures undertaken accordingly.

The purpose of this process is to support good practice, to encourage traveller families to share their proposed arrangements prior to leaving and to ensure that effective contact is maintained. The Traveller Pupil Tracking Form should assist in reducing cases of children deemed to be missing in these circumstances and therefore strengthen the safeguarding procedures in place, as well as ensuring that children's school attendance is maximised.

Together, we anticipate a continued improvement in attendance at school by working jointly with parent(s)/carer(s), specialist support from the Traveller Education Service and the Education Welfare Service to achieve better educational outcomes for our Traveller Children and Young People.

TRAVELLER PUPIL TRACKING FORM

In the interest of pupil welfare, the school and parent/s will complete the following information together **before pupil(s) travel:**

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Child's Name: | Child's dob: |
| Base 1: Leicester address with post code: | |

| |
|---|
| Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/ Carer(s) Name(s): |
| Base 2: Address with post code (other residence): |
| Reason for travel: |
| Landline telephone number: |
| Mobile telephone number: |
| Email address: |

TRAVEL DATES

| Travel Date | HT1 | HT2 | HT3 | HT4 | HT5 | HT6 |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | |
| Expected Return date | HT1 | HT2 | HT3 | HT4 | HT5 | HT6 |
| | | | | | | |

School details where child is dual registered:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Education Packs provided Y / N

Please note:

Traveller children whose whereabouts are unknown can be deleted from the school roll in the same way as other (non-traveller) pupils after thorough investigations have been undertaken and the pupil has not been located. In all cases, the school complies with the LA and Maintained Schools Protocol on the Management of Children Missing from Education.

This policy will be reviewed in 2027

[Working together to improve school attendance applies from 19 August 2024 .pdf](#)
[\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)