

St Mary's Catholic First School

Attendance Policy

April 2019

What is an attendance policy?

Under the *Education Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present. The register must also indicate why a pupil is absent. Our policy aims to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and ensure the school's legal responsibility is met.

What has changed?

Government attendance regulations removes reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Children Missing in Education – CME

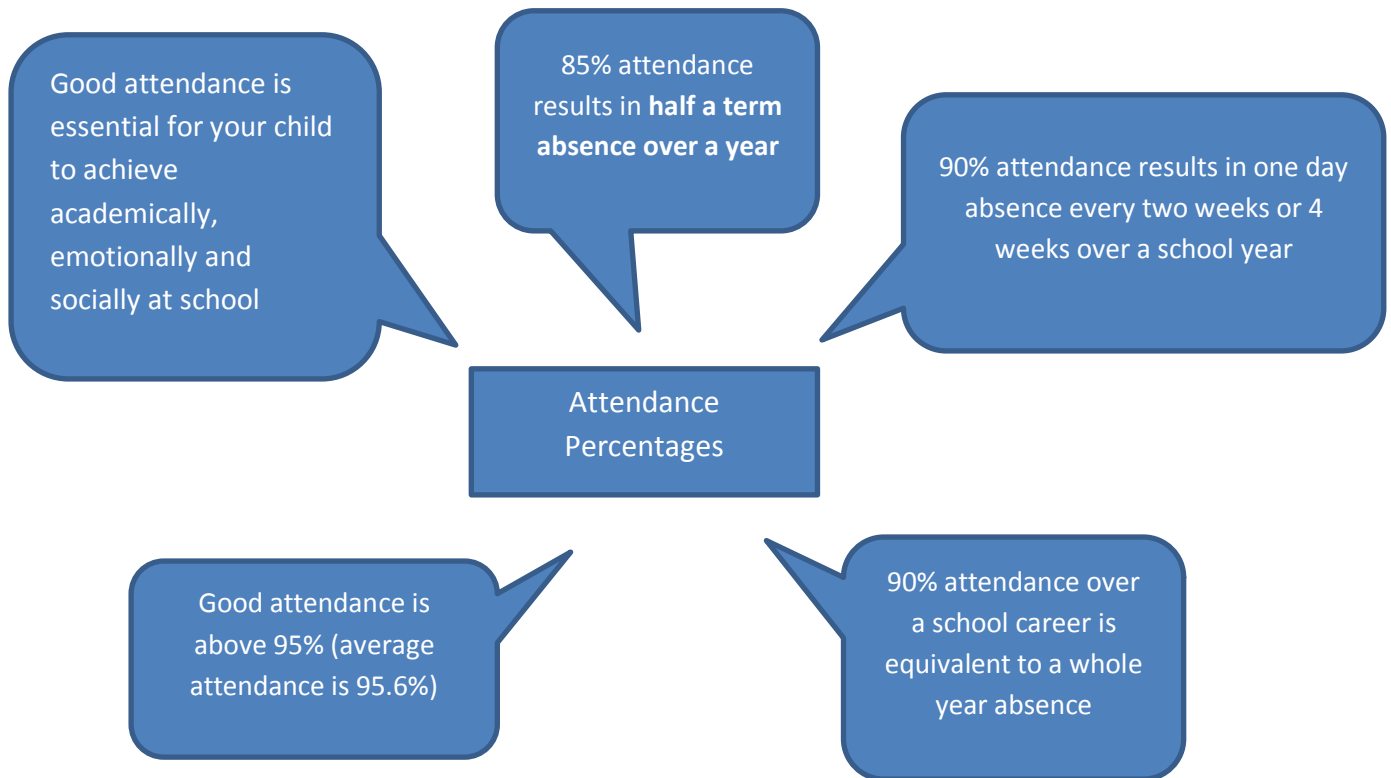
This refers to children who stop attending school, and we have been unable to contact the family. It can be because families have left the area without parents notifying us. A referral form is completed and it would be sent to the CME administrator at Dorset County Council. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

What is considered good attendance?

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning, promoting positive relationships and developing good attitudes to education. Good attendance is considered above 95%, or approximately no more than one day of absence each half term.

What is an acceptable absence?

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason. Only the school can make an absence authorised. An absence is classified as unauthorised when the school believes a child is away from school without good reason; for example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours. School will not authorise an absence when no prior notice has been given to school, unless in very exceptional circumstances.



Staff and parents will work together to ensure good attendance.

Parents will:

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time;
- Ensure any child arriving after the start of school accesses school via the main entrance;
- Contact the school on the first day of any absence before 9.30 am, (reasons will only be accepted from parents / carers of child concerned);
- Contact the school in advance if their child will be absent for any reason (e.g. medical appointment);
- Make any requests for leave of absence on a leave of absence form available from the school office.

School will:

- Take registration each morning and afternoon (two sessions per day);
- Consistently record reasons for absence and indicate if absence is authorised or not;
- Record an attendance as 'late' after 9.00am; (arrival after 9.30am is deemed 'late after registers closes' and is classified as an absence for the morning session);
- Contact parents / carers on the first day of any absence if no reason is given by 9.30 am;
- Contact parent / carer if attendance becomes a concern (below 90%) and invite parent / carer to school to discuss ways that attendance can be supported and improved;
- School will ***only*** grant applications for **leave of absence in term time** in exceptional circumstances,

Working in Partnership

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. If you have any concerns about your child's attitude to school please talk to your child's class teacher.

How are attendance figures worked out?

A register is taken in school at 8.50am each morning and 1.10pm each afternoon. A child will receive a 'mark' for each session; these marks are totalled by school and given as a percentage (e.g. if a child attends school all week they will receive 100%; if a child is absent for one day they will have an attendance of 80% for that week.

Attendance figures are therefore calculated solely at two attendance points each day. Therefore, for example, if a child arrives in school in the morning and then leaves school for an appointment at 11.00am and then arrives back in school prior to the start of the afternoon session, the register will show that the child was in attendance for both school sessions.

How is lateness recorded?

If a child arrives 'late' before 9.10am the child will receive a 'late' mark but will be considered as 'attending' the morning session. If a child arrives in school after 9.20am the child is considered to have been 'absent' for the session.

DASP Attendance Panel

Within our local partnership of schools (DASP) we follow consistent practices when addressing concerns relating to attendance. Where there is cause for concern parents/carers will be contacted following the usual school procedures and a meeting with the Headteacher will be arranged to discuss reasons for non-attendance. If attendance does not improve following this meeting another letter will be sent and attendance will be further monitored for 6 weeks. If after this 6-week period attendance has not significantly improved - usually to at least 95%, parents/carers will be invited to a DASP attendance panel.

The panel is an opportunity for the school, family, other agencies and a solicitor from Dorset County Council Legal and Democratic Services Department to meet together to discuss why a child has such high absence rates and to hopefully come up with solutions to any problems. The panel can recommend several outcomes including a further six week period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance, issuing a Penalty Notice, a parenting order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine.

The attendance process is designed to identify poor attendees quickly and address the issues that are affecting their attendance. When attendance improves monitoring will continue and if it falls the attendance process will be resumed.

Signed: (Chairs of Governors)

Date:

Next Review Date: