

# St Martins School

## Attendance Policy



The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines to all staff, governors and parents.

### Statement

Regular attendance at school is vital if children are to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that school offers. Encouraging children to have a responsible attitude towards school attendance helps prepare them for their adult lives.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents, the local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and the school will liaise with home and other agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and be recognised as such by the school.

### Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is normal by: ensuring children are only absent due to illness, encouraging parents to notify school on the first day of absence and rewarding 100% attendance
- To promote a classroom ethos where punctuality is expected and late arrivals are aware that they are disrupting routines and learning opportunities
- To follow legislation regarding holidays taken during school term-time

### Objectives

- To involve the children in their school attendance
- To have good communication with parents and carers about attendance
- For all school staff to see responsibility for promoting good attendance and recording attendance as part of their role
- To have effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To have an effective working relationship with the Education Welfare Service

## **Attendance and Absence**

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- i. Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
- ii. Unauthorised (where the school will not approve pupil absence)

It is expected that parents or carers will provide an explanation if the child is absent on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, in person at the school or by appointment.

If contact is not made by the parents, then the school will attempt to contact the parents on the first day of absence and on subsequent days.

If absence due to sickness is causing concern, for example attendance has fallen below 85% and the absence pattern is unexplained or made up of several isolated days, a child may be referred to the school nurse. The head teacher may decide that she will only authorise the absence on receipt of suitable medical evidence. This could include a prescription form, appointment card or conversation with health personnel. Parents will be notified about this requirement by letter. The head teacher will regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Children with 100% attendance for each school term will be celebrated by the school.

## **Completing the Register**

The twice daily requirement to register pupils should be perceived as an opportunity to welcome the children formally. Class teachers or teaching assistants take the register every morning and afternoon that school is open to pupils. Totals are noted for fire and emergency purposes. Each absence is recorded with the correct code using the symbols advised by Derby City Education Welfare Service.

Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons; registers provide the daily record of attendance of all students; they are legal documents that may be required in a Court of Law

Staff should ensure that they are familiar with the latest versions of Keeping Pupil Registers – Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations and Absence and Attendance Codes – Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities both are published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

## **Lateness**

School begins at 8.45am Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 am on Fridays. All students are expected to be in school for registration at this times. Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

All lateness, after the registers are closed at 9.15 am on Mondays to Thursdays and 9.00am on Fridays, will be treated as unauthorised absence and the same procedures as for absence will be followed.

### **Monitoring and Referral**

Attendance is monitored regularly by Key Stage Leaders, the Senior Leadership Team and the Office Administrator. Any concerns are initially followed up through verbal communication. If the attendance does not improve, more formal methods of action are taken; a letter will then be sent to parents offering support and notifying them of the 4 week monitoring period. If there is no improvement in attendance a second letter will be sent out informing parents that the Education Welfare Service has been notified about their child's poor attendance. The referral to the EWO will consist of the referral form, copies of correspondence with parents and an attendance print out.

The Local Authority's Educational Welfare Officer meets regularly with the Office Administrator and will take appropriate action in cases of unacceptable absences, including legal action if necessary.

### **Children Missing from Education**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;

- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

(Regulation 4 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

(Regulation 12(3) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

### **Persistent Absence**

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State). (*Source: Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015*).

Any child who has an attendance level of 85% or below on a regular basis is classed as at risk of becoming a persistent absentee by the end of the academic year. This information will be collected every term and parents will be informed by letter if their child's attendance places them in this category.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise requests for absence, not the parents.

The school cannot condone holidays taken during term time and would request that parents arrange holiday absences that do not result in children missing learning opportunities. Permission for absences in term time may only be granted for exceptional reasons. Permission should be requested in writing to the Headteacher with as much notice as possible using the official request form. When a request is not authorised, parents have the right of representation to the School Governors.

If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken any way, the Education Welfare Service may look into the specifics of the case. Derby City Council's Educational Officer monitors attendance regularly of all Derby schools and their children.

The Council may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to any parent/carer who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school. This currently stands at £60 per parent per child (for those who settle within 21 days) and £120 per parent per child (for those who pay within 28 days).

If a pupil has been continuously absent for a period exceeding 20 school days the school will review and in conjunction with advice from the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may remove the child from the school role. In such cases the school will ensure the EWO is informed and missing child protocol is followed.

The attendance policy applies to all students in our school and will be reviewed in two years or as and when new legislation determines.

Policy Reviewed: October 2015

Reviewed by: Laura Crawford, Assistant Headteacher

## **Attendance - Information for Parents**

Regular attendance at school is vital if children are to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that school offers. Patterns of punctuality and attendance begun at school often continue into adulthood and future employment. Encouraging children to have a responsible attitude towards school attendance helps prepare them for their adult lives.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- i. Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence) and
- ii. Unauthorised (where the school will not approve pupil absence)

It is expected that parents or carers will provide an explanation if the child is absent on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, in person at the school or by appointment.

All school sessions begin at 9 am and 1 p.m. All pupils are expected to be in school for registration at these times. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

The school aims to have all children attending regularly and punctually. Children who fail to attend will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

### **What can parents do to help?**

Let the school know why your child is away. Please telephone the school before 9:20am if possible.

Try to make routine appointments (eg dental or doctors' appointments) outside school time.

Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

Send a note when your child returns to school.

### **If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?**

Talk to your child, it may be something simple.

Talk to the Head Teacher or your child's class teacher

Talk to the Education Welfare Service.

Parents need to be aware that Derby City Schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices and a Fast Track Prosecution System in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service.

# St Martins School

## Attendance Procedures



- ❖ Class teachers or teaching assistants take the register every morning at 9am and every afternoon at 1pm that school is open to pupils. On Fridays the register is taken at 8.45am in the mornings and 12.24pm in the afternoons.
- ❖ First day contact – any absences need to initially be followed up by the pastoral team if there is no response then this needs to be referred to the school’s administration team.
- ❖ Attendance figures across school will be reviewed on a termly basis by the Head teacher, Assistant Head teacher, Admin Officer and EWO
- ❖ Letters will be sent to parents on a termly basis informing them of their child’s attendance.
- ❖ 100% attendance will be celebrated each term in assembly
- ❖ If a student’s attendance drops below 85% then direct contact will be made with families and an improvement plan will be put in place.
- ❖ Any staff concerns around student attendance will be reviewed as required.
- ❖ Daily contact will be maintained with offsite providers to ensure that our students are attending the sessions. (Key staff from Junction 16 email details regarding attendance and engagement to relevant staff in school)
- ❖ Horizons attendance will be monitored electronically.