



# St Martin's C of E Primary and Nursery School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Ethos

St Martins is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. The aims of this policy are intended for all children who attend St Martin's including those children who are under compulsory school age, whilst recognising that we cannot take legal action against children under 5 years old.

Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantages. As a School we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of the School to celebrate achievement and effort (Head Teacher's Awards). Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. We will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our students, and reward children who achieve 97% and above attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

### 2. Objectives

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that parents / carers are aware of attendance & punctuality concerns
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies.
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance.
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school.

### **3. Statutory Duty of School and Parents**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents / carers ensure their children receive effective full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording attendance twice per day.

#### **Principles**

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that students arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.

#### **The Education Welfare Service (EWS) & School Attendance**

The EWS is part of the Devon Local Authority (the LA), its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

#### **What happens if your child does not attend school regularly (and their attendance is not authorised)**

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly, and, as the parent, this is your responsibility. A penalty notice may therefore be issued , requiring you to pay a fine up to £120 per parent/carer, per child if their attendance is below and acceptable level. In certain circumstances you may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where you could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500. You will be given every opportunity to improve your child's attendance and you will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

### **4. Statutory Attendance Responsibilities**

There is a legal responsibility to have a morning and an afternoon registration mark for every student at the school.

#### **The School Will**

- a) Record and monitor attendance and Absence
- b) Record and monitor the punctuality of all students and, where necessary, inform parents of persistent lateness and apply appropriate consequences.
- c) Only authorise pupil absence in exceptional circumstances where absence is unavoidable.
- d) Maintain strong home-school liaison to inform and support parents with their child's attendance.
- e) Work closely with the school Education Welfare Officer and other appropriate agencies where there are concerns regarding attendance.
- f) Help to investigate, identify and resolve any issues with children and their families which prevent full attendance at St Martin's and will do everything possible to help return students to full attendance.

- g) Promote the importance of attendance through celebrating students who achieve 97% attendance.
- h) Inform parents/carers (in the form of a letter) on a half termly and yearly basis, of all children whose attendance falls below 95%.

**Parents should**

- a) Ensure their children arrive on time to school with the correct equipment and full uniform.
- b) Be aware that any person who has the care of a child or who has parental responsibility is responsible for ensuring good attendance.
- c) Ensure they are fully aware of school procedures

**5. Reporting Absence**

**Up to 3 Days Absence**

- a) It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence by 9.00am on the day of absence.
- b) The school will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent student will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.
- c) Any absence where a reason is NOT provided will be followed up with contact from the School Office in the first instance then a letter from the Headteacher.

**More than 3 Consecutive Days Absence**

- a) Parents/Carers must contact the School Office on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence giving expected date of return.
- b) Where there has been no parent/carer notification after 3 consecutive days, School Office should contact parent/carer.
- c) Where there has been an absence of more than 4 consecutive days and parents/carers have not made contact or cannot be contacted by school, EWO should be informed.
- d) In the case of 5 or more days of illness, the school should be notified so that the teachers can set work. Medical evidence will need to be provided to the school in order for the school to authorise the absence. The EWO will be notified if the absence is unauthorised.

**Methods of Reporting Absences**

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the school by one of the following methods.

- a) By phone
- b) In person
- c) If unable to contact the school office, a parental note explaining the absence must be passed to the School Office on the first day back at school.
- d) Notification by email

## 6. Authorised Absence

**Absence from school may authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

Parents should note that even if the reason for requesting absence falls within the exceptional circumstances listed above, the Head teacher will still consider the following before making a decision on whether the request will be authorised:

- If your child has an attendance level below 95% calculated over the previous twelve months.
- In the **first two weeks of the school year** (this is a crucial time when all children should be settling in to their new classroom routines and missing this time is detrimental to forming new relationships and routines in a new class)
- **During key assessment points within the school year such as SATs** (this is a time when it is important that all Year 6 children are in school as it is a week of examinations organised by the Department for Education and these tests cannot be taken at any other time).

**Absence from school will not be authorised for:**

- For family holidays or celebrations
- For any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents (an exception to this might be where a child is looking after a disabled parent)
- Minding the house
- Resting after a late night

Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

A parent must complete an **Absence Request Form** from the school office or school website when asking for absence to be authorised.

**School will always put the education of the child first when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.** In doing so, school will also take into account the child's age, stage of education, internal assessment weeks and educational progress when making a decision.

## **7. When Attendance Causes Concern**

Our attendance target is 96.2% and we expect all pupils to achieve this or above.

- a) Staff will set targets to encourage good attendance and address concerns
- b) Contact will be made with parents to advise them of poor attendance.
- c) A referral will be made to EWS and you may be contacted by the EWO with regard to your child's attendance. You could be asked to attend either a attendance meeting or legal meeting in school to look at how the issue can be resolved.

## **8. Punctuality**

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school. Late arrival is detrimental to the learning of both the child who is late and the other children, who are disrupted by a child arriving late. This is why it is imperative that all parents and carers commit to bringing their child to school on time each and every day. If a child persistently arrives after the registers close cases will be referred to the EWO who may issue a penalty notice. Registers close at 8.35am. A child arriving after 8.35am will be marked as late. A child who arrives after 8.45am will be marked with a 'U' code (unauthorized absence).

## **9. Attendance Intervention Thresholds**

Parents, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of Local Authority generated information where appropriate. Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.

School will reward pupils whose attendance / punctuality is much improved or high.

Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 95% may be invited in to school by the head teacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance.

Structured meetings will be held at appropriate times with the schools Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance / punctuality is a source of concern [persistent absence]

Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The school aims to offer an education and working environment appropriate to each individual pupils needs regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexuality, disability or religious beliefs.

## **10. Walking to and from school**

St Martin's discourage children below Year 5 travelling to and from school without adult supervision. In order for school staff to allow children to travel to and from school without adult supervision, each child must have a signed permission slip; these are in the welcome pack that each family receives when they join the school and are also available from the school office. Children who attend after

school clubs will require an additional signed permission slip which will be held by the club coach. If the school has concerns about the safety of a child travelling home without adult supervision this will be raised with the child's parent or carer.

**REVIEW TERM: Annual**

**Date Policy Adopted: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015 – this policy replaces the Attendance Policy previously used by all schools in the Local Learning Community.**

**Dates policy reviewed: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018  
Dates policy updated: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 – to include times children are marked as late/unauthorized absence, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2017 – to amend reward attendance target to 97% and to include school statement on walking to/from school.**