

Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to both academic and social development, which in turn will improve the life chances of children and young people.

What is good attendance?

Attendance	Description	Approx. Days lost per year	Approx. Weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
95-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
90-95%	Below National Expectations	10-18	2-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

So what does 90% attendance actually mean?

90% attendance over a school year = ½ school day missed every week!

It's your responsibility as a parent/Carer.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience. Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

If a child is registered at a school they must by law attend that school regularly and punctually. Children should only miss school if they are ill or unable to attend for some other unavoidable reason.

St Mary's School believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community. We will work with families to early identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Reporting an absence

When a child is absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence by 8.50am and every day thereafter to give the reason for absence. To report an absence you should call the school office on **0208 800 2645** and then choose **option 1**.

- Provide medical evidence (medical appointment card/GP/hospital note/prescription) for length absences (More than 3 days)
- If you do not inform school about an absence, school will contact you. If school cannot reach you by telephone. The school will follow the 'Child Missing in Education Procedures.' (Please see Safeguarding policy and Attendance punctuality policy for further information.)

Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that either calling the school or providing a note for an absence does not automatically mean it will be authorised.

Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is given to the school.

What is an authorised absence?

There may be some circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- Illness - High temperature/vomiting and diarrhoea, emergency medical/dental appointments which unavoidably falls in school time.
- Religious observances.
- Family bereavement.
- Visits to prospective new schools, external exams or educational assessments.
- Exclusion from school.

Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on each day of absence. If your child is absent for more than three days the school will require medical

evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, pupils should attend school for as much of that day as possible. Parent/carers should show the appointment card or hospital letters to the main office so that the absence can be authorised.

What is an unauthorised absence?

These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which "leave" of absence has not been given. This also includes where the school is not informed of why a child is absent. Some examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily – this can be due to child care arrangements, to look after siblings or relatives or because parents are unwell. In this case, alternative arrangements should be in place to ensure the child attends school;
- Shopping trips;
- Birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the Headteacher.

Family holidays and term time leave

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and any term time leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents/carers should not remove their child from school during term time without having first filled in a leave of absence form in advance. (Form can be obtained from the main reception or on the school website.)

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will only be authorised in the most extreme circumstances. If permission is not granted, but the pupil is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

Arriving late to school

The school gate open at 8.50am and all children are expected to be in their classroom by 8.55am ready to start lessons at 9am. Children arriving into the classroom after 9am will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The registers are marked and sent to the main reception by 9am.

On arrival after 9am when the main gates are closed, parents and children must immediately report to the school office to sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

At 9.10am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has 2 or more late marks in a week; a letter will be sent home as a reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Some strategies to improve punctuality

Bedtime routine

- Pack school bag or encourage your child to pack their school bag before going to bed, ready for the next day.
- Getting to bed earlier.
- Setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.

Morning routines

- Setting the alarm for a time that allows all morning routines to be carried out.
- Having breakfast before leaving home, so there is no need to call in at the shop on the way to school.
- Leaving home at least five minutes earlier than you need to which will ensure you get to school on time.
- Coming to school for breakfast club

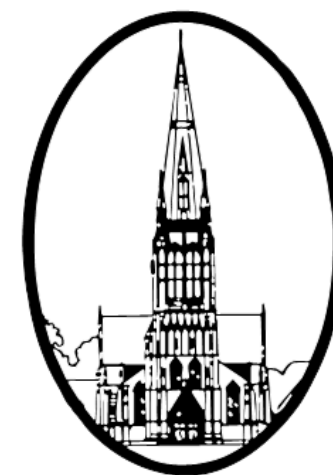
How can parents/carers help their child have good attendance and punctuality?

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Notify the school by telephone on the first day that their child is unavailable to attend school.
- Confirm this in writing when the pupil returns to school.
- Avoid making medical/dental appointments during the school day.
- Do not take your child on holiday in term time and in the case of exceptional circumstances permission must be granted by the Headteacher. The Leave of Absence in Term Time form is on the school website and available at the school office. Applications must be made in advance of the intended date of absence.
- Promote the value of excellent attendance at home and follow the procedures set by the school.
- Advise the school of any difficulties they may be having so that the school can support as appropriate.
- Are aware that Section 444 of the Education Act states, *'If a pupil of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.'*

ST. MARY'S C. of E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Through God's love, we strive to be the best we can be.'



Attendance and Punctuality The Role of Parents/Carers 201-2020

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Taken from 'School Attendance - guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' Department for Education, Nov 2016