



Attendance Policy

Date	Review Date	Responsible Person	Responsible Body
September 2020	September 2021	Headteacher	The Good Shepherd Trust

Information for Parents “Attendance matters...”

“Parents should be aware that there is no entitlement to time off in term time and parents should not expect leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday to be granted as of right.”

We aim to:

- maximise attendance of all children, thus supporting achievement in learning;
- encourage excellent attendance and punctuality as a priority for all;
- maintain parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance;
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with;
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying; and
- regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

As a parent you can help by:

- ringing each morning of absence with a precise reason for the absence (‘appointment’ or ‘unwell’ etc. are insufficient)
- arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours or during school breaks where possible;
- keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

We will:

- follow up unexplained absences with phone calls and letters as soon as possible;
- remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the Home-School Agreement and /Guide to Attendance & Punctuality booklet;
- acknowledge and reward good attendance;
- publish your child’s attendance rate on her/his annual school report;
- report on attendance regularly to the Governing Committee;
- contact you if we have concerns regarding your child’s attendance or lateness;

- make a referral to the Inclusion Officer if we continue to have concerns.
- Record your child's attendance and punctuality and pass on to future schools as necessary.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences" E.g. genuine illness of the pupil, hospital/dental appointment for the pupil which cannot be made outside school hours; bereavement of near relative; religious observance (faith of parents/carers). We realise that there may be other **exceptional** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Illness

Parents are asked to contact the school each day of absence **by 8.30 a.m.** to provide the reason for absence. The school office will contact the parents on the first day of absence if no notification of absence is received by 8.30 a.m.

If your child has an extended, or repeated periods, of illness the school's Attendance Officer will work with you to support your child's return to school and improve their attendance.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Headteachers from granting leave of absence during term time except where an application is made in advance, and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances.

Please ensure that your holidays are taken during school holidays. Time lost by children by, for example, being taken on family holidays in term time, is disruptive to their education and the school. Therefore, family holidays should always take place during the school holiday dates, which are published on the school's website.

Term Time Leave of Absence

Application for term time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent/s on the

'Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances' form available on the school website or from the school office. This should be completed and submitted for consideration by the

Headteacher, on behalf of the school governors, no less than four weeks prior to the requested date. We acknowledge that an unforeseeable event may mean that the four week notice period is not possible.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers there to be **exceptional** circumstances.

If the absence is not authorized, but is taken anyway, a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent and the Inclusion Officer notified, who may investigate the case and take further action if deemed appropriate.

Examples of **unauthorised** absence:

- going for a family day out
- celebrating family events e.g. birthdays
- sleeping in after a late night
- family holidays

- parent/carer unable to bring a child into school
- holidays taken during term time due to differing school holidays for other family members
- where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- In line with the guidance from the Local Authority, leave of absence during Year 6 SATS will not be authorised and a penalty notice may be issued.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Fees are collected, and retained by, the Local Authority.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

- Pupils identified by Police and Education Welfare Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences, or pupils who are reported as being ill but where evidence has come to light that they are actually on holiday.
- As explained above, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which became law on 1st September 2013, state that **Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions (One session is half a day) during the preceding 6 school weeks.

The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Punctuality

At St Mary's we take the view that there are no late children, only late parents.

Morning registration is at 8.35 am. Pupils should be in their classrooms ready for the register by 8.35am and not just coming through the school entrance. If a child arrives late, they must be accompanied to the school office by a parent/carer and signed in. They may receive a late mark on the register.

When the class arrives on time	When a child arrives late into class
Registration takes place quickly and smoothly	It interrupts concentration.
The day gets off to a good start for everyone	It wastes valuable learning time. Teachers provide learning activities for children as soon as they arrive which the late child will miss out on.
Everyone hears information given and is included in important explanations and discussions	The teacher has to repeat information/instructions whilst others have to wait.
Everyone knows what to do and what is expected of them.	The late child is at an immediate disadvantage because they may have missed important teaching points, missed discussions where ideas were shared and will be generally unsettled.
<p>How you can help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that your child has everything they need ready for school the night before; • Ensure your child has a regular bedtime, wake up time and morning routine on school days; • Ensure you and your child arrive at school punctually; • Talk to a member of the school staff if there is a problem. 	

Arrival after the close of registration at 9.15 a.m. may result in the morning session being marked as unauthorized (marked as a 'U' code). We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

Children who remain uncollected at the end of their school day will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time. You will need to come into school to sign out a late collected child. Repeated late collection will be investigated.

Leavers

If your child is leaving, other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to:

- meet with the headteacher if you are changing schools for a reason other than moving out of the area, to discuss the reasons for the change and the potential impact of the move on your child's educational and social relationships.
- give the school the date of move, new address or town you will be moving to, new school and start date. If you move your child and have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils

(Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

This policy was reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Governing Committee in September 2020 and will be reviewed again in September 2021.

Headteacher:		Date:	Sept 2020
Chair of LGC:		Date:	Sept 2020