



St Mary & St Pancras CE School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**Policy updated by LMT (LH) November 2020
Policy reviewed by Governors: December 2020
Review due: November 2022**

Statement of intent.

As a church school what and how we teach, what and how our pupils learn within and beyond the classroom are and must be rooted in Christian values:

Friendship, Respect, Endurance, Thankfulness and Forgiveness.

These values are fundamental in the implementation of this policy to ensure that we maintain our distinctive Christian character of which we are proud.

Aims:

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- encourage children to develop a respectful and disciplined approach to timekeeping and attendance;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

Being at school:

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Expectations and responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the pupils to:

- attend school every day.
- attend school punctually.
- attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they inform the school **daily** of absence or, if known in advance, the dates when their child will be unable to attend school, explaining the reason why.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- not take leave in term time.
- respond to letters or phone calls regarding their child's attendance.
- provide medical evidence if requested.
- ensure that non-urgent dental/medical appointments take place outside of school hours.

It is the responsibility of the school to:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality to monitor the individual child's attendance and punctuality. These records include reasons for absence when provided by a parent or carer.
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the Headteacher or Deputy can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested by the school or the Local Authority Pupil Attendance Service.
- meet with parents if their child's attendance is below 95% to offer advice and support in order to tackle and improve this.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition in Friday assemblies, attendance display in the hall and reminder posters for parents sent periodically via Parent App and Newsletters (Appendix 2).
- regularly inform parents of attendance winners in the school newsletter.
- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- liaise regularly with the Local Authority Pupil Attendance Service to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.

- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Early Help or the Pupil Attendance Service.
- notify the Local Authority (LA) after 15 days sickness.
- notify the Pupil Attendance Service and Children Missing in Education Team after 10 days unexplained absence or sooner if necessary (see note on FGM below).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

If a teacher or other member of staff suspects that a student has been removed from, or prevented from, attending education as a result of FGM or in order to undergo FGM, a referral should be made to the local authority children’s social care and the police. Contact MASH on 0207 974 3317 for further guidance.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to:

- request from the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team regular reports on attendance and punctuality.
- support the Headteacher and school staff in applying this policy.

Authorising absences:

There are limited reasons for authorised absences which are detailed below. While an explanation for absence may be offered by a parent or carer, it is the responsibility of the school to authorise an absence. In authorising an absence the decision of the Headteacher or Deputy is final.

| Authorised absences: | Unauthorised absences: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genuine illness of the pupil • obligation to self-isolate • urgent hospital/dental/doctor’s appointment for the pupil • major recognised religious observances • visits to prospective new schools • external exams or educational assessments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park • a birthday treat • looking after other children / other family member • appointments for other family members • holidays |

Persistent absences:

Irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance will be initially explored by the Deputy and then may be referred to the Local Authority Pupil Attendance Service. They may write to a family or meet with them to plan support to improve their child’s attendance.

Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the School or Local Authority Attendance Service may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school punctually at their allocated time (see below).

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place at your child's start time and pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.10am, so after 9.30am lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and may be referred to the Local Authority Pupil Attendance Service. If a child is marked late 5 or more times in a term their parents will receive a letter reminding them of the importance of punctuality. If a child is marked as unauthorised absence due to lateness 10 or more times in a rolling 10 week period the parents may receive a penalty notice.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Impact of Covid 19 on our Attendance Policy.

Government advice on attendance during the pandemic is subject to change at short notice. Any changes that impact on our policy and or Local authority legal responsibilities will be shown on our website and via school newsletters/Parent App.

Our current changes as of 2nd September 2020 are:

Staggered start: 8:45am start for Years 1,2,5 & 6; 8:55am start for Nursery, Reception, Years 3 & 4.

Staggered finish: 3:20pm finish for Nursery, Reception, Years 1 & 2; 3:30pm finish for Years 3,4,5 & 6.

We will work closely with the Pupil Attendance Service (PAS) and other Camden and health support agencies to ensure that children are able to access education.

Please see Appendix 3 – 'Can my child go to school?'

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school and the impact of Covid 19 please speak to a member of SLT on 0207 387 6117 so we can look at what additional measures or support can be put in place.

Reporting to parents

Parents are informed of their child's overall annual attendance figure. They are provided with number of actual absences, which is also broken down into authorised and unauthorised absences.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. Therefore:

- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time. Medical appointments should be accompanied by the relevant appointment card.
- pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- if a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person.*

Exceptional Leave of Absence

*Parents are asked to note that amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.*

*Amendments to the 2006 regulations **remove** references 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 should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.*

In the light of the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** the Headteacher will only authorise leave in term time in **exceptional circumstances**.

The governors of St Mary & St Pancras Primary School have defined exceptional circumstances as follows and given direction to the number of school days a child can be away:

| Authorised exceptional circumstance | Number of days |
|--|--|
| Family funeral in UK of a direct relation (sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle) | 1 day or 2 days if travelling a substantial distance |
| Family funeral in Europe (non UK) of a direct relation (sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle) | 2-3 school days |

| | |
|---|---|
| Family funeral in remainder of world (sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle). | up to 5 days |
| Genuine, recognised emergencies which prevent travel. Eg <i>volcanic ash cloud or natural disaster while on holiday</i> | up to 5 days or longer if deemed necessary by national and international organisations. |
| <i>Please note you will be required to present evidence to support your request for exceptional leave.</i> | |

The governors have noted that the following circumstances are not exceptional and, under the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* **cannot** be authorised

| |
|---|
| Examples of non-exceptional circumstances |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family weddings, baptisms, or similar celebrations. • Visiting family members who live abroad. • Being unable to find flight dates/times that are within the allocated school holidays. |

- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances as detailed above, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, at the earliest opportunity. *See Appendix 1.*
- During Key Stage assessments for Year 6 the Headteacher reserves the right to limit the number of days absence so the child can complete their assessments within the permitted timeframe for a time-table variation.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Pupil Attendance Service will be notified.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a, or if a, parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. They can also be issued for persistent lateness. Failure to pay a penalty notice within the timeframes may lead to prosecution by the local authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

**REQUEST FOR
EXCEPTIONAL
LEAVE
DURING THE
SCHOOL TERM**

REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

◆ INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Only the head teacher can authorise exceptional leave. Completing this form will not give you automatic permission to take your child on leave during term time. The head teacher will consider your request and give you a decision in writing.

As a parent or carer you must complete this form if you wish to apply for exceptional leave for your child during term-time. You should discuss your request for leave with the head teacher **before** you book your trip or buy tickets. The local authority strongly advises head teachers not to authorise exceptional leave in term time, and it is unlikely that your request will be agreed.

The conditions under which exceptional leave may be granted are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

If your child is taken out of school during term time without authorisation from the head teacher, you may be referred to the local authority. The authority has the power to issue you with a Penalty Notice if you take your child out of school without permission. A fine of £120 is issued to each parent for each child. The fine must be paid within 42 days. If it is paid within 28 days it is reduced to £60 for each parent and each child. If you do not pay the fine, you may be taken to Court and fined up to £1000. If convicted you would also receive a criminal record.

If the head teacher does authorise exceptional leave during term time, your child must return to school on the date agreed in writing with the head teacher. If your child does not return to school on this date, the whole period of absence will be classified as unauthorised. You may be referred to the local authority and incur the penalties outlined above.

If your child does not return to school within 10 school days of the agreed date, your child may be removed from the school roll. You **must** notify the school immediately if the child's return is going to be delayed. If your child is taken off the school roll, you will have to apply to Camden Admissions for a new school place for your child. There might not be a place available at this school, and your child would be placed at an alternative school.

REQUEST FORM

I am requesting permission to take exceptional leave of absence for the child/children named below:-

Name of child/ren: _____

Year / Class: _____

Period of absence: From: _____ To _____

Number of school days absent: _____

Date of return to school: _____

Destination: _____

Reason for request for exceptional leave (*continue on another sheet if necessary*):-

Brothers and sisters requesting exceptional leave from other schools:-

Name: _____

School: _____

Year group/class: _____

Details of person to be contacted if your child does not return to school on the agreed date:-

Name of contact person: _____

Address of contact person: _____

Telephone no. of contact person (include international code) _____:

Email address of contact person: _____

Name of parent/carer: _____

Signature of parent/carer: _____

Date: _____

(Administrative use only)

Parent's request for exceptional leave:-

Exceptional leave is / is not agreed by head teacher / school governors

Signature of head teacher: _____

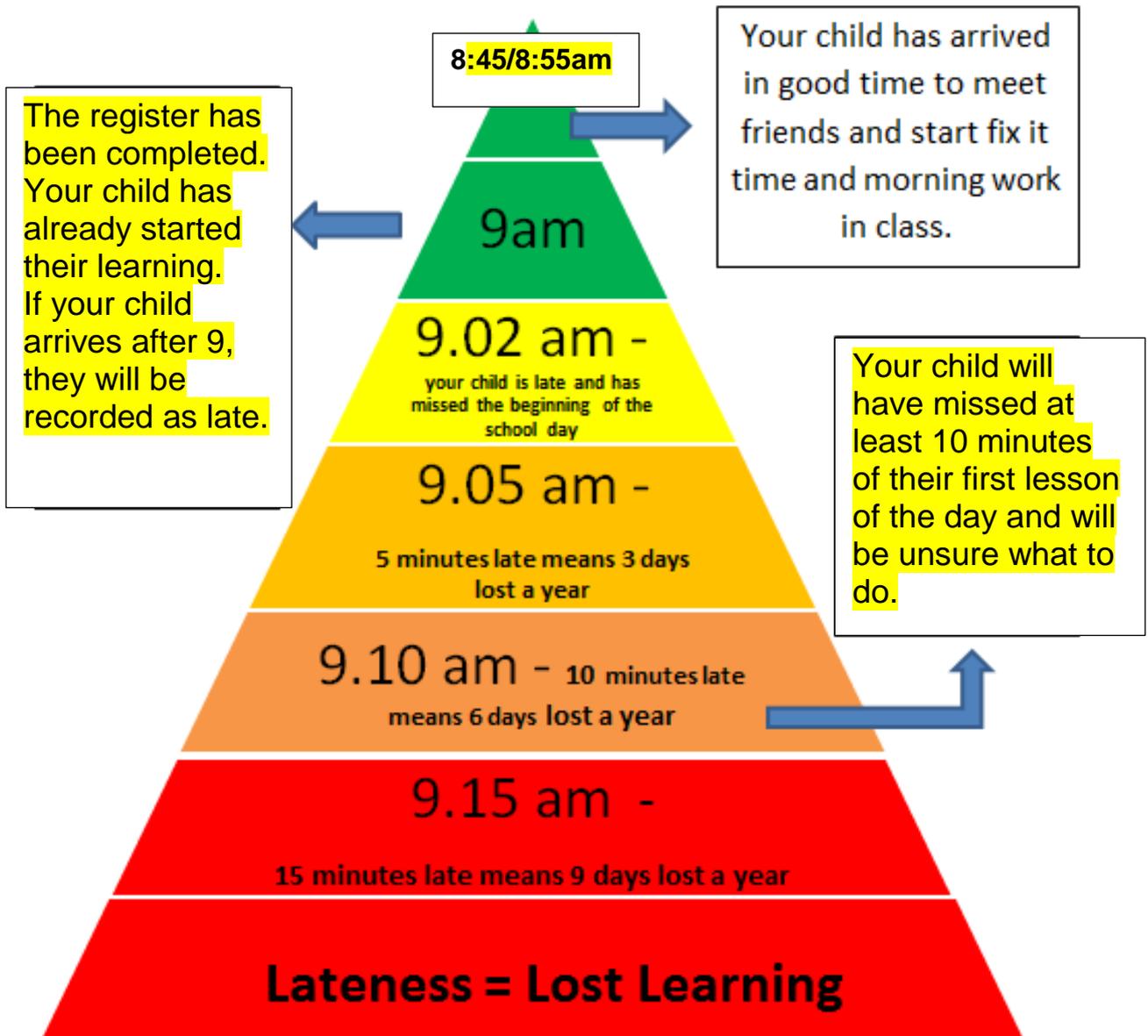
Date of letter responding to parent: _____ -



(Copy to pupil file, with response letter).

At St Mary & St Pancras C.E. Primary School

Every minute of learning counts



Children find arriving at school late upsetting and they miss out on important opportunities.

Please work with us to provide your child with the best chances of learning by ensuring they are in school **every day and on time.**

Thank you 😊

Appendix 3: Can my child go to school?

