

Pupil Attendance Policy DRAFT

St Monica Primary School



St Monica Primary School
Inspire - Endeavour - Achieve

Approved by:	FGB	Date: February 2021
Last reviewed on:	Draft – being reviewed on 5.02.2021	
Next review due by:	TBC	
Staff Responsibility:	Attendance and Family Support Officer	
Governing Committee:	IEB	

Vision

Here at St Monica Primary School regular attendance and punctuality are recognised as being key to secure good pupil outcomes. The links between regular attendance, reaching potential attainment and future life opportunities are well researched. Children who regularly miss school will miss learning experiences and will not achieve the progress they should. Our school will encourage good attendance and will be robust in monitoring attendance and take action when your child's attendance fails. This follows our values:

Innovation - trying out new things

Nurture - growing in a community of care and support

Success - achieving our best

Passion - developing enthusiasm and a love for learning

Integrity - being honest

Responsibility - accepting accountability for our actions

Excellence - achieving the extraordinary



Absence can be a symptom of:

- Wider safeguarding concerns- domestic violence, hidden harm, neglect etc.
- Low aspirations
- Health or medical needs
- Parents/Carers not appreciating the importance of Primary School education

Aims

- To maximize good attendance across the whole school including EYFS by encouraging, recognising and rewarding good attendance
- To investigate individual absences making it very clear to pupils and parents that unauthorised absence is not acceptable at St Monica Primary
- To work closely with parents and pupils, along with professional agencies, to help them overcome problems which may prevent students from attending regularly.
- The Legal Framework
- It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take problems seriously that may lead to non-attendance.

- Penalty notices will be issued under the Local Authority's (LA) Code of Conduct for the use of penalty notices in cases of non-attendance at school. A copy of this conduct can be obtained from The Education Welfare Service.

Monitoring approach to Attendance at St Monica Primary School

Attendance is checked on a twice daily basis. Parents of pupils who are absent without explanation will be automatically contacted by mid-morning by The Attendance and Family Support Officer. Parents should expect school to make contact on the first day of their child's absence. If school is unable to make contact with you by phone, this could result in the school making a visit to your home.

Parents must provide explanation for absence to school if this has not already been discussed with The Attendance & Family Support Officer. Those pupils whose attendance is causing concern may be asked to provide medical evidence for absence. This could be by means of prescription or doctor's appointment.

The authorisation of any absence is at discretion of the school. If a pupil is regularly absent due to illness, the school reserves the right not to authorise the absence and to request parents to provide medical evidence.

In the case of those pupils whose level of attendance is causing a concern, the school's Attendance and Family Support Officer will send home letters and a copy of their child's attendance to date. In some cases, the school may choose to meet with parents or conduct a home visit if there is no improvement the pupil will be referred to The Education Welfare Service who visit school regularly to monitor pupil's attendance.

All unauthorised absence will put parents at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice, or legal proceedings being instigated for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school.

Targets

For the next academic year 2021/2022 the targets have been set as below:

In order for an attendance record for the whole school to be deemed good it must be 97% or above:

- 100% = excellent attendance
- 97% - 100% = no concern
- 96.9% - 95% = concerning
- 94.9% - 93% = risk of underachievement
- 92.9% - 90% = severe risk of underachievement
- 89.9% - 0% = extreme risk of underachievement

We consider good attendance to be of such importance that we place a great deal of emphasis on it and put considerable resources into promoting it. The school is very rigorous in the use of the electronic registration system in school ensuring the correct and appropriate codes are used and also has a safeguarding contact call and visit system that addresses unauthorised and consecutive absences.

Parents' Responsibilities

- Parents are under a legal duty to send their children to school regularly
- It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence as soon as possible on the day of absence
- Parental contact should be made by telephone on each day of absence

- Parents should resolve any in-school problems with the appropriate member of Teaching Staff or Senior Leadership Team without any adverse effect on attendance
- Parents should discuss any problems with the school at the earliest opportunity so that a joint effort can be made to address them
- The School, website, newsletters and occasional letters provide the parents with details of our expectations

Monitoring approach to Attendance at St Monica Primary School

Attendance is checked twice daily. Parents/carers of pupils who are absent without explanation will be automatically contacted by mid-morning by the Attendance Office. The school may conduct home visits at any opportunity to ensure safeguarding of our pupils. Pupils whose attendance is causing concern will be asked to provide medical notes for absence; this could be a prescription, appointment cards or prescribed medicine labels.

The authorisation of any absence is at the Head Teacher's discretion. If a pupil is regularly absent due to illness, the school reserves the right not to authorise the absence and to request medical evidence.

In case of those pupils whose attendance is below 97% the school will send home a letter informing parents of the attendance termly. If the attendance continues to cause concern the Attendance officer will request a meeting to address the issues contributing to the poor attendance. In some cases, the school may choose to meet parents with the Education Welfare Officer or conduct a home visit.

All unauthorised absence will put parents at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice, or legal proceedings being instigated for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school.

Strategies to Encourage Good Attendance

We believe that pupils who do achieve good attendance should be recognised and rewarded; thus providing them with positive reinforcement and providing other pupils with further incentives to improve their attendance. The Head Teacher leading on attendance meets with the Attendance officer weekly to discuss actions and impact on outcomes. The Senior Leadership Team meet regularly with the Attendance and Welfare Officer to discuss actions and impacts on outcomes.

A range of strategies we may use. Examples are given below;

- A special celebration at the end of the school year for pupils with 100% attendance for the year and over their primary school career
- Certificates for and classroom celebration for 97% attendance and above half-termly
- Regular attendance information sent to parents to assist them in monitoring their child's attendance, where attendance is below 90%
- Regular promotion of good attendance in assemblies. Attendance is on every school Snippets and is discussed at Parents' Evenings
- Senior Leadership Team receive daily and weekly updates on overall attendance
- Senior Leadership Team and teaching staff receive weekly overview praising individual classes for achievements and improvements
- Class with highest attendance on Inspire and Endeavour will be recognised in Friday's celebration assembly with a certificate and receive a reward of extra play
- Detailed analysis of attendance figures sent to the Senior Leadership Team including governors each term

- Regular reports data sent to IEB leading on attendance meets with Attendance & Family Support Officer
- Computerised registration system which tracks absences and reasons for absence
- Contact with parents on first day of absence with no reason by phone and if unable to make contact we make may conduct safeguarding home visit
- Home visit conducted if deemed necessary by Attendance and Family Support Officer
- Support for pupils and parents where attendance difficulties are emerging
- Fast Track meetings with EWO where attendance becomes a concern and where attendance does not improve rapidly we assist with the preparation of prosecution
- Referral to Family Matters when there is limited engagement or attendance is hard to shift
- Fixed Penalty Notice to parents – fixed penalty notice 5 days or more leave of absence days taken

Interventions to Address Poor Attendance

St Monica Primary School employs a wide range of strategies to address the problems of pupils who have unacceptably low levels of attendance. The Attendance and Welfare Officer who is responsible for attendance keeps detailed records of concerns and regularly analyses data in order to target resources. Records show the routes of intervention, progressing from the Teacher, the Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer. Early intervention is the key.

Following initial interventions and if the problem has still not been successfully dealt with, St Monica will request a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer to support the pupil and parents/carers in discussing a suitable action plan to get the pupil back into full time education.

As a final measure, where the non-attendance of a pupil is not solved by the Attendance & Welfare Officer, we will refer to the Local Authority (LA) who will seek legal advice and may pursue legal action to enforce attendance through the courts.

Where there have been issues of long-term absence we also work closely with the parents to ensure the pupil is re-integrated back into school.

The Local Authority convenes annual attendance conferences and network meetings and is working closely with the Health Service professionals to improve attendance across the city.

Legal interventions

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices (whereby Parents/Carers will receive a fine) were brought in by Southampton LA in September 2005 as an alternative to prosecution. All students who have 10 instances of unauthorised attendance (i.e. 5 days) may Will be liable. A full copy of the LA's Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices in Cases of Non-Attendance at School can be obtained from the school.

The Importance of Registration

All schools must keep an attendance register in which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, students are marked present or absent. St Monica Primary opens at 8.30am and the registers close at 8.45am. If a child arrives after 8.45am the child will receive an 'L' mark. Absence will also be denoted as authorised or unauthorised.

Pupils who arrive after 8.45am, must also sign in at the school office. The late arrival will be marked present with a 'L' Pupils arriving after 9.05am will receive a 'U' code this code counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

Persistent lateness will result in strategies to address the lateness; parents failing to ensure their child is in school on time are at risk of a Penalty Notice being issued.

It is essential that the registers are accurate and secure.

Punctuality

In order to receive a present mark, pupils should arrive in time to attend registration. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will have to sign into the office. On Inspire your child will be taken straight to class by the office staff and a staff member will record from the parent the reason for their late arrival.

Pupils arriving late on Endeavour will be asked by the office for their reason for their lateness and will be sent straight to class.

If your child is late twice in the same week the Attendance Officer may contact parent/carers by telephone and send a letter informing the parent of the punctuality issue.

You will receive a text every day that your child is late for school.

The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed of persistent lateness, which could lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Leave of absence

St Monica Primary will not automatically authorise requests for leave of absence. There is not an automatic entitlement for any family holidays or leave of absence during term time.

The Head Teacher will consider each request on its merits but will usually only agree to leave in exceptional circumstances. The most important considerations are:

- Whether the leave of absence could be taken during periods of normal school holiday
- Whether the student is subject to any examinations during the academic year concerned and achievement may be adversely affected
- Whether due consideration has been given to the timing of the leave of absence, e.g. at the start of a new term
- The pupil's current level of attendance
- No authorised absence will be given during KS1 or KS2 SAT's periods, this will include all siblings within the family

Parents must apply in writing to the Head Teacher at least three weeks in advance of the planned leave of absence. An application form is available from the school office. After receiving and processing an application a letter will be sent to Parents/Carers acknowledging the application. Parents will be asked to come into school to meet with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer (where 5 days or more have been requested) before a final decision is made.

Any requests for leave of absence that have not been agreed by the school, but are subsequently taken will put parents at risk of a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

In cases where a leave of absence request is declined the school will enter a "G" code in the register which denotes an unauthorised absence.

School Attendance Policy Criteria for Success

- Attendance rate increases
- Authorised absence rate decreases
- Unauthorised absence rate decreases
- Improvement in individuals' attendance
- The profile of good attendance within the school community

SCHOOL SPECIFICS

St Monica Primary School

School Starts 8:30am

Present mark given until 8.45am

Late mark given between 8.45-9.05 am

U code, un-authorised absence, applied after 9.05 am

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