



Attendance Policy

September 2023

The Mill Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives The Mill Academy will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice, and support.

Aims

1. To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers, and governors.
3. To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To promote a positive rewards system for good attendance.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
9. In the case of long-term illness, to recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Aim 1: To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School.

- Apply whole school attendance policy effectively.
- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos, and curriculum.
- Monitor the effects of poor attendance on academic progress.

Aim 2: To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for all those associated with the School Including Pupils, Parents, Teachers, and Governors.

- Produce termly/annual reports to governors.

- Emphasise the importance of good attendance to parents at induction meetings for the parents of new pupils.
- Display materials.
- Discuss attendance issues regularly with the head teacher
- Provide daily & weekly monitoring to Headteacher to indicate progress and attendance trends.
- A range of award systems, to include trophies, certificates, and end of year prizes etc.
- Agree criteria for the authorisation of leave of absence in term time based on guidance from the LA and the Government.
- Update information for parents on the school website
- Include attendance on the school weekly newsletter

School Procedures:

Unauthorised Holidays/Unauthorised Absence

In law an offence occurs if a parent/carer or person with parental responsibility fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are a registered pupil, and that absence is not authorised by the school.

The Education Welfare Service delivers the service of issuing penalty notices on behalf of the Local Authority.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right.

Any request for leave must be made in advance. Any leave of absence in exceptional circumstances cannot be authorised retrospectively. The request should be made by the parent "with whom the pupil normally resides". If this is the parent who is **not** requesting leave of absence then the full name, address and email address of the parent doing so **MUST** be provided on the form. Forms are available from each school office.

If any leave of absence is taken, then it is possible that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

If a leave of absence is planned to visit family members living overseas, possibly for extended periods of time, parents should seek advice from the Head teacher.

Unauthorised Absence

If a child has 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absences in a term parents/carers will be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

School strongly believes that if children are to get the greatest benefit from their education, good attendance and punctuality are imperative.

School will do all that we can to encourage and support children, parents, and carers to achieve/fulfil their expectations.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school office for further advice and assistance if required.

School Procedures:

Mrs Gillian Beckett (Parent Support Advisor) is our Attendance Officer.

Late Mark

The school day starts at 8.55am. Any pupil arriving at school after 9.00am, and have not had a medical appointment, are recorded on the register with a late mark. The system is monitored regularly, and parents are contacted by letter where necessary. Pupils with re-occurring late marks are discussed with the school attendance officer and the Head teacher on a regular basis.

Class Procedures

If a child is absent then school requires a note or telephone call stating the reason for absence and the telephone calls are logged in an absence book kept in the office. The information is passed on to the child's teacher and the Attendance Officer. When absence notes are received in class the class teachers are expected to send these to the office for noting on the register.

Education Welfare Service

The EWO service is contacted for advice when necessary.

Attendance officer attends termly update training each half term

Advice can be given on contact with Education Welfare Services when all other in-house options have been exhausted.

Aim 3: To Develop a Framework which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks.

- School office staff makes contact with parent/carer on first day of absence and notes made on Arbor system. This can then be followed up by an absence follow up email if parents/carers can not be contacted by phone.
- Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures
- Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents)
- Attendance officer to meet with HT fortnightly

Aim 4: To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils.

- Highlight attendance in:

- ❖ Assemblies
- ❖ Via social media platforms/school newsletters
- ❖ Staff available to talk to pupils
- ❖ Making use of available resources
- Set aside area/time for parents to talk to staff.
- Seek improved communication with parents e.g. when parents ring in.
- Provide accurate and up to date contact information for parents.
- Involve parents from the earliest stage.

Aim 5: To develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data.

- Standardise recording of:
 - ❖ Authorised/unauthorised absence (and to have decided after two weeks the category of absence for the pupil)
 - ❖ Educational activity i.e. visits **(V)**
 - ❖ Presence
- Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
- Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
 - ❖ Governors
 - ❖ Parents
 - ❖ Pupils (individuals or groups)
 - ❖ Education Welfare service
- Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

School Procedures:

Weekly Attendance Monitoring

Registers are checked daily and weekly attendance percentages for each class are updated each Friday to give the total attendance achievements for the week. Governors and St Mary's Academy Trust are informed of attendance figures at termly governing body meetings. Parents are informed of attendance figures through the weekly newsletter

Aim 6: To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication Between Home and School.

- Initiate first day absence contact if deemed necessary.
- Home visit by Attendance Officer/and or other member of staff, if contact cannot be made with a parent/carer. First day safe and well visits will be used for vulnerable families following consultation with the Head teacher. Safe and well calls will also be made on day 3 of absence and home visits will otherwise be completed after 5, and 10 days, however earlier if there are any concerns.
- Promote the expectation of absence letters / phone calls from parents.

- Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships.
- Provide information in a user friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
- Encourage all parents into school.

School Procedures:

When a child is absent without notification and the teacher has concerns re. Safety of the child, then the teacher can send to another class to ask a sibling (if possible), or send a note to the office for a telephone call to be made and check on the child's safety. If a child returns to school without notification of the reason for absence then the office will send home our standard absence letter.

Medical Appointments

If a child has a medical appointment (doctor, dentist etc) it is the expectation that these will be made outside of school hours if possible. However, where a child needs to attend an appointment in school hours, a letter or appointment notification must be shown to the school office prior to the appointment date and arrangements made for the child's collection if necessary. Appointments can then be noted on the school register.

Internal Attendance Panel

Early intervention is seen as essential. Where a child has persistent and regular periods of both authorised and unauthorised absence leading to attendance of less than 96% then the parents/guardians are notified through a school notification letter and an attendance printout. Attendance is monitored closely and if after 4 weeks, attendance has not improved then a second letter is sent to parents. Consideration is then given whether to invite parents to attend an internal school attendance panel, which consists of the Headteacher & Attendance officer. The aim of this panel is to raise parental awareness of their child's attendance and stress the need for their child to attend regularly if they are to take advantage of the education on offer. The panel also gives parents the opportunity to explain why their child has been absent. It is hoped that through this early intervention the need for formal procedures can be avoided. Where there has been no significant improvement in attendance, formal procedures will then be taken, as by law, parents are required to send their child to school on a regular basis.

Communication with Parents

The school has adopted the policy of keeping parents regularly informed about attendance, thanking parents for their support and urging all parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Aim 7: To Promote a Positive Awards System for Good Attendance.

- Identify finance for our system of rewards.
- Actively promote attendance, reward pupil attendance, and involve pupils in its evaluation.
- Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
- Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others e.g. Education Welfare Service, Parents, Behaviour Support Service.

School Procedures:

Rewarding Good Attendance/Most Improved Attendance

The school has clear systems for rewarding good attendance. Each week, the class with the highest attendance 'wins' the attendance trophy. Children who have achieved 100% attendance each term are rewarded with a certificate and a prize. Children who have achieved 100% attendance in an academic year receive a certificate and an individual trophy. The need for regular attendance is also a subject for school assemblies.

Aim 8: To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other Services and Agencies.

- Designated key staff for liaison with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
- Carry out initial enquiries / intervention prior to referral.
- Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of EW Service and Head teacher
- Agree attendance reviews with key school staff.
- Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
- Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community e.g. community police contact officer.
- Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school e.g. School Nurse / Educational Psychologist.
- Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments and inform them of the same.

Aim 9: In the Case of long-term Illness Recognise the Needs of Individual Pupils when Planning Integration Following Significant Periods of Absence.

- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
- Involve / inform all staff in reintegration process.
- Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- Consider peer support and mentoring.

- Involve parents as far as possible.
- Agree timescale for review or reintegration plan.
- Include Education Welfare Officers, parents and pupils in reintegration plan.

This Policy will be revised by the The Mill Academy in September 2024