

**St Martins School**  
**Attendance Policy**  
**(Approved by Governors July 2013)**

### **Introduction**

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents/carers keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent, both parents, or carer with whom the child resides.

### Principles

#### **Arrival and Registration**

At the secondary phase

All children should be in the school ready to register at 8.40 a.m. and 1:50 pm. each day. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. Morning registration ends at 8.50 a.m. and afternoon registration ends at 1:55 pm. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she must report to the school office and will be marked in as 'Late'.

At the primary phase

All children should be in the school ready to register at 9:00 am and 1:15 pm each day. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she must report to the school office and will be marked in as 'Late'.

### **Parental Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all parents to ensure that their children attend regularly, and are punctual to school. Attendance is discussed with each parent at consultation evenings, with the current percentage attendance being reported.

### **Illness and Medical Appointments**

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 10:00am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. Reception will record the reason for absence and a note made in the absence log. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures truancy call will be sent out to all parents from whom a reason for absence has not been received (secondary phase) and parents contacted by the school office (primary phase)

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctors/ dentist/hospital is required.
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- d) Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days.

### **School Responsibility - THE LAW and School Attendance**

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013) restrict leave of absence for family holidays in special circumstances. The decision rests with schools, and families have no "right" to such leave. The application for leave must be made in advance by the parent the pupil normally resides with. This applies to all students the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets, and for some governing bodies to set "focused absence targets" as required by the Secretary of State. School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module. It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers (primary phase) Form teachers (secondary phase) are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

## **Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which can not be made outside school hours

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the principal. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- \_ Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- \_ Truancy before or during the school day.
- \_ Absences that have never been properly explained.
- \_ Holidays not agreed

Where there are concerns about attendance a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer [EWO]. The EWO liaises with the school regarding absences and will make contact with the parents.

### **Family Holidays/ Absence during Term Time**

Governors understand that in these harsh economic times it is attractive to take holidays during term time but by doing this it does have a detrimental effect on the education and learning of your child. Therefore, in line with council policy, unless it is an exceptional experience, holidays during term time will not be authorised.

### **Example of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:**

To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance.

## **Procedure**

- Parents complete a request for holiday form (available from reception) and return it to the school for authorisation
- Parents are informed of the schools decision (ideally within 5 working days)
- If the holiday is not to be authorised parents and the EWO will be notified at the same time. In such cases a HITT (Holiday in term time) warning notice will be served by the Educational Welfare Service (EWS)
- If a Warning has been served and the holiday is taken and the conditions are in line with the Code of Conduct a Truancy Penalty Notice may be served by the EWS

- If the Truancy Penalty Notice is not paid the LA will prosecute for the absence under the Code of Conduct Regulations

**Rewards**

Certificates for good attendance are given out during assemblies and achievements evenings.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for policy review.