



Attendance Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body on an annual basis (or sooner if required).

Policy was agreed by the Governing Body on 19th of September 2024.

It is due for review on 18th September 2024.

Signature.....Date.....

Headteacher

Signature.....Date.....

Chair of Governors

OVERVIEW

At St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary school we strongly believe that **attendance and punctuality** are vital for a child to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class, school and community.

In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values, we will be helping to ensure our children benefit fully from the educational opportunities available to them. This in turn will equip them for life, impacting positively upon their future as citizens, employees and employers. We believe that;

- Repeated and persistent lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.
- Prolonged and persistent absence, in any year group, affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on attainment and progress.
- Unnecessary, parentally condoned and unauthorised absence should be challenged and both school and parents/carers held responsible for the impact this may have on any pupil's full attendance.

AIMS

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) through our wholeschool culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and responsibilities

The Governors

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders
- focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and
- providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they
- are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to
- develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and authorising the Head of School to be able to do so.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with

SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ann Robinson who can be contacted on 0121 588 2371 or headteacher@st-marymagdalene.sandwell.sch.uk

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Issuing attendance and punctuality letters to parents
- Holding parent meetings where attendance and punctuality fall below expectations.
- Making calls to parents where a child is not in school and no contact has been made
- Making calls to parents to discuss levels of absence and offer support
- Liaising with the Local Authority attendance team

The attendance officer is Sarah Rackham who can be contacted by telephone on 0121 588 2371

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance at the start of each session, using the agreed codes (See Appendix 1) and submitting this information by 9:15am for the morning session and within 15 minutes of the start of the afternoon session.

They are also responsible for creating a culture of strong attendance with the children they teach and their families.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Make calls to parents/carers where a child is not in school and no contact has been made.
- Provide attendance reports to the Head teacher and Attendance Officer as required

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Sarah Rackham our Attendance Officer, who can be contacted via telephone by calling 0121 588 2371

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time and be ready to learn.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

- We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
- We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:
 - Present
 - Attending an approved off-site educational activity
 - Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment
- See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
- We will also record:
 - Whether the absence is authorised or not
 - The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
 - The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:50am and ends at 3:30pm. Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken within five minutes of the start of the afternoon session for the class.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school admin/office staff, who can be contacted by telephoning 0121 588 2371 providing the full reason for the absence. We will mark absences due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or the need for the child to be absent from school from the information given.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents should present the evidence to the school office who will record on the register that it has been seen.

The pupil's parent(s) must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

The school day begins at 9.00am and all children are expected to arrive before this time. At 9:00am all gates and external doors to the school will be closed and any children arriving will need to enter school through the main reception area.

At 9:20 am the registers will officially be closed for the morning session. This will be the case unless it can be demonstrated that there was a legitimate reason for the child arriving at school after registers close. For example, an emergency medical or dental appointment where proof of the appointment is provided. In this case the appropriate code will be used.

(M). The Head teacher will make this decision.

Following up unexplained absence.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact Walsall Local Authority Attendance Team, or Police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Parents will have access to the following attendance reports regarding their child:

- A termly attendance report
- An annual attendance report
- A termly discussion with class teachers at parents' evening

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations.

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- an issue involving the immediate family of the child which could not have been foreseen and cannot be reasonably accommodated in a normal school holiday period or
- The previous attendance record of the child is strong e.g. consistently above 95%, and it can be demonstrated that the education of the child will be enhanced by the absence.

When determining if circumstances are exceptional, we will consider:

- The proximity to a school holiday. (Could the absence be reasonably covered within the next school holiday?)
- If it is necessary for the child to be absent. (Could other family members bring the child to school?)
- The length of the absence and if the length of the absence matches the purpose of the absence.
- If there is a pattern of absence.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, available from the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Legal Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty Notices

The Head teacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Strategies for promoting attendance

A rewards system is in place to improve class attendance. Children can win a weekly class reward of £10 for 100% attendance, £5 for 98% £1 for 96% attendance. Amounts can be used to fund an end of year experience based on the amount accrued over the year.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The school will work closely with parents to overcome complex barriers. The Family and Safeguarding Worker and Special Needs and Disabilities coordinator will meet regularly with parents to identify actions that need to be taken to enable the child to access an appropriate education based on their current need. The provision for children identified as being absent due to complex barriers will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Team during their half termly review meetings.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The school will work closely with parents to put in place appropriate provision and support for children unable attend due to mental or physical ill health or SEND. This provision may include:

- Setting work to be completed at home
- Visits to the child in the home from school staff
- Engagement of LA Virtual school staff
- A reduced timetable

The provision for children identified as unable attend due to mental or physical ill health or SEND will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Team during their 3-weekly review meetings.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The school will work closely with parents to put in place appropriate provision and support for children returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence. They will consider:

- Additional support and provision in class to enable the child to catch up on missed learning
- Additional individual provision to enable the child to catch up on missed learning
- A reduced timetable if this is appropriate

The provision for children returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Team during their half termly review meetings.

Attendance monitoring

The Headteacher will monitor the attendance and punctuality of all pupils daily ensuring absences are appropriately coded (See Appendix 1) and, where children are absent, ensure appropriate action has been taken.

The Attendance officer will monitor attendance at least weekly ensuring:

- Absences are followed up.
- Appropriate letters are issued.
- Meetings are held with parents whose children are below the expected level of attendance.
- Groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern are identified.
- Any necessary home visits have taken place.

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance.

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance.

The School Will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence.

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
 - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
 - Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
 - Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

The school will follow the following process where attendance falls below 93% and is therefore unlikely to meet the school's expectation (96%)

1. Issue letter 1 (see appendix 3)

If there is no evidence of improvement after 4 weeks

2. Issue letter 2 (see appendix 4)

If there is no evidence of significant improvement after a further 4 weeks

4. Send out a warning letter (see appendix 5)

If there is no evidence of significant improvement after a further 4 weeks

4. Send out a final warning letter (see appendix 6)

If there is no evidence of significant improvement after a further 4 weeks

5. Refer to Sandwell LA for initiation of a legal process.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by the Head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code Definition Scenario

/ Present (am) Pupil is present at morning registration

- \ Present (pm) Pupil is present at afternoon registration
- L Late arrival Pupil arrives late before register has closed
- Attending a place other than the school
- K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
- V Attending an educational visit or trip Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
- P Participating in a sporting activity Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
- W Attending work experience Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
- B Attending any other approved educational activity. Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
- D Dual registered Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
- Absent – leave of absence
- C1 Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
- M Medical/dental appointment Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
- J1 Interview Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
- S Study leave Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
- X Not required to be in school Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
- C2 Part-time timetable Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
- C Exceptional circumstances Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. Absent – other authorised reasons
- T Parent travelling for occupational purposes. Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
- R Religious observance Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
- I Illness (not medical or dental appointment) Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
- E Suspended or excluded Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
- Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
- Q Lack of access arrangements. Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
- Y1 Transport not available. Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
- Y2 Widespread disruption to travel. Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
- Y3 Part of school premises closed. Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
- Y4 Whole school site unexpectedly closed. Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
- Y5 Criminal justice detention. Pupil is unable to attend as they are:
- In police detention
 - Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or
 - Detained under a sentence of detention
- Y6 Public health guidance or law Pupil’s travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
- Y7 Any other unavoidable cause To be used where an unavoidable cause is not

covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence

G Holiday not granted by the school Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

N Reason for absence not yet established Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes

O Absent in other or unknown circumstances. No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence

U Arrived in school after registration closed. Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Z Prospective pupil not on admission register. Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

Appendix 2 Leave of Absence Request

September 2024



**Schools Attendance Support Service
Leave of Absence Request**

**Before completing this form, please read the
Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes for Parents and Carers**

PLEASE ENSURE BOTH SIDES OF THIS FORM ARE COMPLETED

Please send your completed form via MOVEit
T3335595_AS_SCHOOLNAMELOA-CHILDDINITIALS

Section A: Student's Details			
ALL SECTIONS MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED – ONE APPLICATION PER STUDENT			
School:			
Student's Name:		Date of Birth	/ /
Address where student usually resides:			
Post Code:			
Section B: Reason for Leave of Absence			
I would like to request a Leave of Absence for the above-named student:			
From	/ /	To	/ /
<p>Head teachers can only authorise a Leave of Absence if they consider that the detail and information you provide constitutes an exceptional circumstance. You MUST provide all the details and information you would want the Head teacher to consider in deciding if your request can be granted.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>			
<p>By signing this application, I understand and agree the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That I have read the Leave of Absence Request Guidance Notes and that if I take my child on an Unauthorised Leave of Absence the school can request that I and any other Parents/Carers of my child are issued with a Penalty Notice (a fine of up to £160 in respect of each child and each Parent/Carer) and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court). That I am a Parent/Carer with whom the student 'normally resides'. That I understand it is the Head teacher's decision as to what is and what is not an "exceptional circumstance" and I should discuss any questions I have regarding the decision made by the Head Teacher prior to the absence starting. 			
Parent/Carer Applicant PRINT NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	/ /
Parent/Carer Applicant SIGNATURE		Date of Application	/ /
Relationship to Student:			
Telephone Number:			
Mobile Number:			

Section C: Additional Parent/Carer(s) with Parental Responsibility

You must enter the names/dates of birth and address details of every **ADDITIONAL** adult who holds Parental Responsibility and/or care of your child.

Parent/Carer FULL NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	/ /
Address (if different from student's home address)	-----		
	Post Code		
Relationship to student			
Parent/Carer FULL NAME	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth	/ /
Address (if different from student's home address)	-----		
	Post Code		
Relationship to student			

For School Use ONLY

Request form Received	Date	/ /	Information corresponds with school records & Data collection sheet included	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Number of days authorised			Number of days unauthorised	

How applicant and any other additional adult were advised of outcome:

Letter(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:	
Email(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:	
Telephone call(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:	
Text Message(s) to Parent/Carer(s)	Date:	
School Comms (e.g. internal messaging system)	Date:	
Face to face meeting(s) with Parent/Carer(s)	Date:	

School staff may need to provide evidence of the above should Court proceedings follow.

School's Request for Penalty Notice

<p>I have read the Leave of Absence Request Guidance. I understand that I am requesting a Penalty Notice and that this cannot be withdrawn once issued, other than in the circumstances detailed in the Guidance.</p>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreed by Head teacher	Date	/ /	Signature of Head teacher:
Referral to Schools Attendance Support Service	Date	/ /	Referrer Name:
Position in School:	Contact E-mail Address in school (who you wish any correspondence to be sent to)		
Copy of student's Attendance Summary attached	<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of student's Data Collection Sheet attached	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of decline correspondence sent to parent/carer(s) attached	<input type="checkbox"/>		

A Leave of Absence referral can be accepted when you use MOVEit together with a fully completed Leave of Absence Request form, a copy of the school's decli to parents/carers (or confirm agreement to provide a Section 9 Witness Statement) and the student's Attendance Summary/Certificate and Data Collection Sheet

Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes for Parents and Carers

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 absence **may not** be Authorised unless:

- (a) An application has been made in advance to the Head teacher by a Parent/Carer with whom the pupil normally resides (lives with most of the time); and
- (b) The Head teacher, or a person Authorised by them, considers that Leave of Absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

It is only a Parent “with whom the child normally resides” (lives with most of the time) that can apply for a Leave of Absence for their child. **A Parent/Carer who does not live with the child cannot apply for a Leave of Absence. Any application they might make should be rejected by the school.**

Parents/Carers should ensure that any Leave of Absence application is made in advance of any Leave of Absence to be taken. (Schools may have specific timescales for processing Leave of Absence applications. Parents/Carers should make sure they know what these are. Different schools may have different timescales.)

Parents/Carers should ensure that they know if their Leave of Absence application has been Authorised by the Head teacher before planning, booking or paying for anything in relation to that Leave of Absence application.

Parents/Carers should ensure they provide the Head teacher with all the detail and information they would want the Head teacher to know in deciding if a Leave of Absence can be Authorised.

It is at the Head teacher’s discretion to decide if the detail and information provided by a Parent/Carer can be considered as an “exceptional circumstance” and agree if any Leave of Absence can be Authorised.

Disagreements between Parents/Carers and schools in relation to what is and is not an “exceptional circumstance” cannot be considered by the Schools Attendance Support Service. Parents should contact school to resolve any disagreements before the leave commences.

Penalty Notices

The Schools Attendance Support Service can only issue Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence following receipt of a request to do so by the school.

If a Leave of Absence is not Authorised and the child is then absent from school, the Head teacher can request that the Schools Attendance Support Service issue Parents/Carers with Penalty Notices.

Penalty Notices are issued based on the information and detail provided by the school and in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/schoolattendancepenalty>

With effect from 19th August 2024 A Penalty Notice may be issued **to each parent/carer, for each child** as follows:

1st Leave of absence within a 3 year period : £80 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent/carer, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

2nd Leave of absence within a 3 year period: £160 per parent, per child

3rd Leave of absence within a 3 year period: Prosecution (per parent, per child) for the offence (penalty notice action will no longer apply)

Please note that if the fine is not paid within 28 days or the Local Authority proceed straight to court action you are likely to be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. The maximum fine the court can impose for a first offence is £1,000 per parent, per child.

Unpaid Penalty Notices can result in Parents/Carers being put before the Magistrates Court and fined up to £1,000 per Parent/Carer per child plus Court costs. If a history of offences exists, parents may be prosecuted under Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 and the court can impose fines up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose fines up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Appendix 3 Letter 1



Stanway Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B711RP

Tel: 0121 588 2371

Head Teacher: Mrs A Robinson

Email: headteacher@st-marymagdalene.sandwell.sch.uk

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We need your help, please.

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} days of school, which is equal to {#} lessons missed

so far this school year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? -NHS (www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness. We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At St Mary Magdalene CE Primary School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on {Pupil Name} absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Pupil Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet me or {Pupil Name}'s class teacher if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about

your child's attendance.

Yours Sincerely

Appendix 4 Letter 2



Stanway Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B711RP

Tel: 0121 588 2371

Head Teacher: Mrs. A Robinson

Email: headteacher@st-marymagdalene.sandwell.sch.uk

Appendix 4: Letter 2

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

Further to my letter on _____ we still have concerns about of {Pupil Name}

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} days of school, which is equal to {#} lessons missed so far this school year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell -and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance *Is my child too ill for school?* -NHS (www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

Could you come into school on {date} at {time} so we can look at how we can work together

to improve {Pupil Name}'s attendance

Yours Sincerely

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Appendix 5 Final Warning Letter



Stanway Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B711RP

Tel: 0121 588 2371

Head Teacher: Mrs A Robinson

Email: headteacher@st-marymagdalene.sandwell.sch.uk

Final Warning Letter – School Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

Further to my letters on _____ and _____ and our meeting on _____ we still have concerns about of {Pupil Name}

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} days of school, which is equal to {#} lessons missed so far this school year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell -and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance *Is my child too ill for school?* -NHS (www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We will continue monitoring {child name}'s attendance over the next 2 weeks. If there are any further unauthorised absences during this period, we will submit a referral to the Local Authority Education Department to request further action.

We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet with me or {Pupil Name}'s class teacher if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

Yours Sincerely|