



*Being different, succeeding together*

## ***Attendance Policy***

**Successful Learners Confident Individuals Responsible Citizens Effective Contributors**

*Healthy and Active Safe and Nurtured Included and Respected Reaching their Full Potential*

We believe that learning should be joyous and purposeful; where learners are excited and engaged through excellent teaching which challenges them and shows them what they can do. We ensure that learning is of high quality which is planned and managed so that every child is supported and challenged.

We believe in strong partnerships with families and the wider community to ensure that learning outside of our school thrives.

Through our teaching and learning, we aim to achieve the core purposes and outcomes of the Bailiwick Curriculum.

### **1. Introduction and background**

St Martin's Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's well being and happiness
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is unacceptable.

## **2. Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

It is the school's legal responsibility to record attendance daily, both for morning and afternoon sessions. Recording absence is by using 'SIMs' information management system. The school uses the Education Department's of agreed codes if a child is absent or late.

The school will report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.

## **3. Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the School's Attendance Officer.

## **4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

Ideally we would like all pupils to have an attendance of over 95%.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include:

allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, class teacher or School's Attendance Officer. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes and individual targets.

## 5. Absence Procedures:

### **If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:**

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.20am. This can be done by emailing [office@stmartins.sch.gg](mailto:office@stmartins.sch.gg)
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take a phone call.
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.

### **If a child is absent the school will:**

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Annotate reasons for absence on SIMs to act as a record
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the class teacher and head teacher if absences persist.
- Discuss and / or refer the matter to the School's Attendance Officer if there are any concerns about the frequency or pattern of absences.

## 6. The School's Attendance Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School's Attendance Officer from the Education Service. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Education Office.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the SAS (School Attendance Service) themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 710821.

## 7. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and might feel embarrassed about this. It is then possible for the lateness to encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day for YR, 1 and 2 starts at 8.55am and the afternoon session starts at 1.15pm. For juniors the day starts at 8.45am and the afternoon session at 1pm.

We expect children to be in the playground before this time ready to come in on time.

Registers are marked within 10 minutes of the start of school. If children arrive 5-10 minutes late for school they will receive a late mark (L).

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be initially asked to meet with the school's lead for attendance and well-being to resolve the problem. Parents can also approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

## **8. Holidays in Term Time**

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time for a holiday. Holidays are not authorised by the school although parents / carers may still choose to take their family away in term time. For safeguarding reasons parents/ carers must inform the school of their decision to take a term-time holiday. This must be done in writing and ideally submitted at least 2 weeks before the holiday commences. Holiday forms are available for completion in the school office.

## **10. Collection of data**

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made and pupil / family support can be given. Every fortnight the Attendance Lead will collate a range of data in order to identify persistent absentees and those children who are at risk for becoming persistent absentees. These may be discussed with the School's Attendance Officer who visits the school on a fortnightly basis.

## **9. Summary**

The school has a duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote pupil attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The school staff is committed to working with parents and pupils and to ensure the highest level of attendance possible.

C .Mason  
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Attendance / Mental Health Lead

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