

Issued by the Governors of St Mary's CE School, Clymping Attendance Policy



<i>Signature</i>	
<i>Review Schedule</i>	
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Introduction

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. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The Government says:

- There is a legal responsibility for parents to send their child to school every day
- Children should be in school for at least 95% of all sessions
- School is in session for 190 days a year, leaving parents a further 175 days a year in which to have days out together and take a holiday

Aim

Our aim is the highest level of attendance possible and for all absences to be explained with acceptable reasons. Alongside this we want to have all our children in class ready to start the day promptly.

Records of Attendance

Children's attendance details are recorded in the registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions of each school day. Registers are returned to the school office immediately after registration.

The school office collates information about absences, taking telephone calls from parents / carers and advising teachers of the reason for any absences on that day.

Monitoring Attendance

The attendance information from the registers is entered into the school's database which is used both by the school and by the Education Welfare Service to monitor attendance and persistent absences.

If there is concern about a child's attendance, the headteacher will contact the parents or carers in the first instance.

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance and they will request regular reports from the Headteacher.

If a child is absent

- It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform the school as early as possible on the first day of the child's absence. Parents may either 'phone', speak to a member of staff or send a written message.
- If the child is ill then the school should be notified of the nature of the illness, and if possible, the expected date of return.
- If no contact has been received from the parent/carer, the school office will phone them on the first day of absence.
- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and inform the school office who will then contact the parent/carer
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then immediately contact the parent or carer in order to check the safety of the child.

Definitions

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 carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Pupil's absence for medical or dental appointments may also be authorised, although where possible, parents should try to make appointments out of school time. If a pupil has an appointment during school time then the school should be informed beforehand and the parent must report to the school office to sign their child out of school.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parent/carers do not have this authority. The school does not have to accept the parent/carers offered explanation as a valid reason for absence. If there are doubts about the reasons offered, the reason given for an absence is not acceptable or if no reason is given, then the absence is treated as unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without a valid reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Requests for Leave of Absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they make the most progress possible, and that holidays should be taken during the school holidays.

The headteacher has the right to approve Leave of Absence, in exceptional circumstances, for a family holiday or special event. However, the following considerations will apply:

- A child's previous attendance record will be taken into account in making the decisions as to whether or not to authorise the absence
- Absence for annual holiday of more than two weeks will not normally be approved
- Absence will not be authorised during the National Curriculum Assessment period
- Requests for absence for a special event will be considered on an individual basis

Parents are asked to complete a 'Request for Absence' form, available from the school office.

Each case will be considered on its merit. Parents/carers will receive a standard letter either agreeing that the absence will be authorised or classifying it as an unauthorised absence.

Long Term Absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parent / carer will be asked to meet with the school to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Welfare Service whose representatives will visit the child's home and seek to ensure that the parents/carers fully understand the serious nature of the situation.

The Governors, supported by the Education Welfare Service, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parent/carer to repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Lateness

- Lateness is discouraged and persistent lateness is unacceptable. Where pupils miss registration and fail to provide an adequate explanation they will be marked with an unauthorised absence for that session.
- If a child arrives late and misses registration they must be signed in at the school office.