Introduction

At St Mary's, we are committed to nurturing every child (and every adult) as a unique individual to be the best that they can be, within a safe, friendly and welcoming community rooted in Christian values. Our vision is to provide an education of the highest quality through a rich, broad and balanced curriculum which focuses on the development of the whole person. We want children to develop as happy, confident and articulate individuals who will love learning throughout their lives.

Our Attendance Policy is shaped by our vision which seeks to promote and celebrate all that is good and unique in every individual within our community. As it says in Philippians 4:
Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Our chosen key Christian values as a school of friendship, respect, trust, hope, wisdom and perseverance are at the heart of our positive and nurturing approach and underpin our relationships with others and our practice.

Aims

In line with our vision and our commitment to being the best that we can be, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We understand the potential impact of mental health on attendance and the link between adverse childhood experiences and mental health on children's attendance in school. Therefore, as a school, we ensure that support is provided for children absent from education, including targeted interventions for children whose attendance is a serious cause for concern. We recognise that poor attendance can have a negative impact on pupil progress and we are committed to supporting all children to be in school, on time every day through the strategies outlined in this policy.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance (2022)](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)](#)

> [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> 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

3.3 The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance

The designated senior leaders are responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are Laura Wallis (Headteacher) and Chris Frankish (Assistant Headteacher Inclusion) and can be contacted on the email addresses below:

stmarysbeverley.head.primary@eastriding.gov.uk

c.frankish@stmarysbeverley.eriding.net

3.4 The senior admin officer

The senior admin officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7) alongside the designated senior leaders
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement alongside the designated senior leaders
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leaders responsible for attendance including the headteacher
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the designated senior leaders including the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The senior admin officer is Nicki Rawlings and can be contacted via the school office

01482 868149

stmarysbeverley.primary@eastriding.gov.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis through the school system, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office daily at morning and afternoon registration times.

3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will:
- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the senior admin officer or one of the designated senior leaders for attendance in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and arrives on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an 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 the start of the afternoon session. It will mark 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 attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 am and will be kept open until 9:00 am. Children arriving after 9:00am but before 9:20am will be marked as late. Children who arrive after 9:20am will be marked as an unauthorised late absence. Parents/carers must notify the school office about the reason for a child arriving into school after 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence (and each subsequent day of absence where necessary) by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on 01482 868149 from 8:30 am. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers should request leaves of absence by contacting the school office on 10482 868149.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:
> Before 9:20: will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

> After 9:20: will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Ongoing punctuality issues are identified by the senior admin officer and brought to the attention of the designated senior leaders who respond by contacting parents/carers as appropriate.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

> Follow the school process which involves texting the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason, then telephoning if no response is received. If contact cannot be made, second contacts will be contacted. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts and a reason for absence still has not been received, the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher Inclusion will make a decision about next steps.

  The school may take advice from the Education Welfare Service within the Local Authority and act on advice given. School staff may also go to the child's home address.

> 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

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues without explanation, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school's parental communication system (School Gateway) enables parents and carers to have instant and up-to-date access to their child's attendance and absence levels. Reminders about this system are given in the school newsletter on a regular basis. A summary of children's attendance and absence is also provided as part of the annual written report to parents and carers.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.

Exceptional circumstances could include:
 1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
 3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Principal Education Welfare Officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. The Principal Education Welfare Officer will discuss each case with an independent Headteacher and will make a recommendation to the referring school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance/holidays-during-term-time-and-authorised-absence-from-school/

The school follows the local authority guidance, in line with the new National Framework for Penalty Notices.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Regular reminders in the newsletter about the importance of good attendance
- Reasons requested from parents when reporting absence
- Any unreported absences followed up by a text and then phone call on the same morning
- Parental support provided for identified families where there is persistent lateness or absence including meetings where targets are set
- Half-termly analysis of data
- Involvement of the Educational Welfare Officer

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

> Meet with the Education Welfare Officer on a termly basis to discuss attendance and absence data.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Letters are sent to parents/carers of pupils who are persistently absent. These are followed up with meetings with parents where support strategies are discussed and agreed and targets are set. Close monitoring of all pupils in this category takes place on a weekly basis. Where no significant improvement is seen in a pupil's attendance, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Officer to identify further support and/or suitable next steps to promote attendance.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum on an annual basis by the designated senior leaders with responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

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

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment

Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)