

Attendance Guide for Parents

Why is attendance important?

At primary school level, the pace of development in children is so fast that even a handful of days missed can cause disruption to a child's learning journey. We will always try to help your child catch up on missed work where possible but continued absence may affect your child's ability to exceed their potential.

When does my child need to be in school?

We open our gates at 8:35am and all children need to be in the classroom by 8:50am. Children will be marked late if they arrive after 8:50am.

What happens if my child is late?

All children arriving after 8:50am need to sign in via the office. Any child arriving between 8:50am and 9:10am will be marked in using an 'L' code. Any children arriving after 9:10am will be marked in using a 'U' code as they are more than 20 minutes late after registration. On the MCAS app an 'L' will show as pink and a 'U' code will show as red.

What happens if my child needs to be absent from school?

We understand that all children get sick from time to time but do ask that you think carefully before keeping your child off school. If your child does need to be absent from school for example for sickness or diarrhea, please notify the school either by telephone on 01296 482094 choosing option 1 to report an absence or using the attendance email address attendance@sma.odbst.org. When notifying the school of an absence please give your child's full name, their class and then a detailed reason for absence. We ask for a detailed reason for absence as this helps us track any illnesses throughout school. All absences should be reported by 8:50am. Please note that you will need to telephone the school on each day of the child's absence, even if the absence is continuous.

If the school is not notified of an absence, we will attempt to contact you, by first calling contacts on your child's record and then if no reply, conducting a home visit.

What are authorised and unauthorised absences?

All absences are looked at on an individual basis and authorised/unauthorised in line with our Attendance Policy and guidance from Buckinghamshire Council and the Department for Education.

Authorised absences are absences which the school can allow.

This can include

- Sickness/illness
- Medical appointments
- A day of religious observance

Unauthorised absences are absences which the school does not allow.

These include

- Family holidays
- Day trips
- Your child missing school for their birthday
- Going shopping

What is attendance monitoring?

Pupils' attendance is monitored on a half termly basis in line with our attendance policy. If a child's attendance falls below 95% parents/carers will be notified by email, the child's absence will then be monitored for a further 3 weeks (during this time, no absence will be authorised without evidence). If there is no improvement in your child's attendance during the monitoring period, you may be invited to an Attendance Contract Meeting within school where we can work together to support improvements in your child's attendance.

My child is trying to avoid school, what should I do?

Contact our Family Liaison Officer to openly discuss your worries, there are many reasons your child may be avoiding school, for example difficulties with schoolwork, friendship issues, family difficulties or routines. It is important we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem early before it progresses.

Requesting term time leave of absence?

St Mary's School expects all children to attend school regularly and as such and in accordance with Government guidelines we do not authorise any term time absence unless in exceptional circumstances. If, in the extreme cases, parents wish to request leave in light of exceptional circumstances, we ask that you complete a Leave of Absence request form. The Headteacher will consider each application and a nominated officer within the school will respond to parents with the outcome of the application. If the reasons for absence detailed in the request are not deemed to be exceptional, the school may refer the absence to the Local Authority and an initial penalty notice may be issued to a parent/carer in respect of a pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the first penalty notice is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time or more within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

190 days in school	10 days absent	19 days absent (almost 4 weeks missed)	29 days absent (about half a term missed)	38 days absent (8 weeks missed)	47 days absent (Almost 10 weeks missed – over a quarter of the school year)
	180 days in school	171 days in school	161 days in school	152 days in school	143 days in school
100% attendance	95% attendance	90% attendance	85% attendance	80% attendance	75% attendance
Excellent record	Good record	Needs to improve	Cause for concern	Poor	Very poor
Gives the best possible opportunity for success! You are likely to achieve your potential and meet or exceed your targets! Well done!		Gives less chance of success. You are less likely to achieve your potential and meet your targets.		Much less chance of success. You are unlikely to achieve your potential and meet your targets.	