

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School



Attendance Policy

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This Attendance Policy takes careful account of the Education (Pupil's Attendance Records) Regulations 1991, The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (Amended 1997), The Education Act 1996, the 'Social Inclusion: Pupil Support' DFEE Circular 10/99, the policy of the Local Education Authority and the aims of the school as outlined in associated/relevant school documentation.

School Targets for the Academic Year

St Matthew's attendance target for the academic year 2014/2015 is: 96%

Introduction

At St Matthew's part of our vision statement is that school, parents and church work in partnership. If pupils do not attend school regularly, they will not achieve and reach their maximum potential. Attendance at school is principally the responsibility of parents/carers and the LA has statutory powers that can be used to ensure that parents meet their responsibilities. The LA also has means of support, which are deployed to assist schools in their task of achieving good attendance levels. It is however good management of attendance within schools that has the greatest impact on effecting regular attendance, together with effective partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the community.

Legal Context

LA Responsibility for provision

- The LA has a general duty to ensure that efficient education is available to meet the needs of the population in the area.
- The LA has to ensure that sufficient schools providing appropriate primary and secondary education are available for all pupils in the area requiring a school place.
- The LA is required to provide suitable education whether at school or otherwise for children of compulsory school age who may not receive education unless arrangements are made for them, either because they are ill, or have been excluded from school or are unable to attend school for some other reason.
- Education needs to be suitable to the age, ability, aptitude and any special needs the child or young person may have. It is for the LEA to decide what is suitable after consultation with parents, and in accordance with policy and having regard to guidance.

LA Responsibility for attendance

- The LEA has a duty to monitor attendance and to institute proceedings in relation to non-school attendance offences.

Parents' responsibility for attendance

- Parents are required to secure education for their children either for their children either by regular attendance at school or otherwise and failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them. Under Education Law, carers have the same legal responsibilities as parents and are subject to the same processes.
- If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of school age receive suitable education.

Legal responsibility of the school

- The school is responsible for adhering to pupils registration procedures and for reporting unexplained absences of longer than two weeks and irregular attendance to the LA.
- Schools must notify the LA of pupils deleted from the admissions register.
- Schools are obliged to maintain two registers an Admissions register and an Attendance register. All registers must be kept securely for three years.
- Each year schools are required to submit to the DFE, information about attendance.
- Governors are required to report on attendance in their Annual Report to Parents.

Monitoring and review of attendance

The School Expectation

Every school must have a named person with responsibility for attendance, at St Matthew's the named person is the deputy head teacher. At St Matthew's regular monitoring and review of attendance takes place through various levels:

Daily

The class teacher has initial responsibility for dealing with concerns. Any concerns are reported to the deputy head teacher/head teacher and EWO. Office staff carry out first day calling and meet late arrivals at the door.

Weekly

Attendance is published weekly to parents/carers in the newsletter and presented to pupils in the weekly praise assembly, identifying: overall attendance, class with the best attendance, class with the worst attendance, class with the best punctuality and class with the worst punctuality.

Letters are sent to parents/ carers when a child is absent with no reason being provided. Action is taken by school with regard to pupils whose absence is causing concern. Discussion with the EWO, who may be asked to intervene in cases where the school has not been able to ascertain reasons for absence or where other concerns exist.

Half termly

Review of registers and statistics relating to attendance for whole school and targeted groups. Letters are sent to parents/carers when their child's attendance has fallen below 90% with a summary of their attendance for that half term. A discussion with parents/carers, EWO and/or the deputy head teacher takes place and appropriate action is taken.

Termly

Pupils are sent gold, silver, bronze or red letters home depending on their level of attendance:

- Gold: 100% Attendance
- Silver: 99% - 96%
- Bronze: 95.9% - 94%
- Red: Below 94%

A summary report on attendance is prepared for Governors and the progress towards meeting the school targets is discussed.

Yearly

Overall attendance and persistent absence figures are reported by the LA and RaiseOnline.

Holidays in term time

From September 2013, by law, all holidays in term time (now called leave of absence in exceptional circumstances) must be agreed by the head teacher before the holiday is taken.

Parents/carers do not have a right to take their children out of school during term time and may be fined for taking holidays without the school's consent. A penalty notice (similar to a parking ticket) may be issued where parents/carers fail to ensure regular school attendance. **Penalty notices, when issued, tells the parents/carers to pay a fine of £60 (if paid within 21 days) or £120 if paid within 28 days (from September 2013).**

It is the head teacher's decision if an absence is to be authorised or not. They may request the Attendance and Prosecution Service to consider issuing a penalty notice for any pupil with irregular school attendance.*

(*Supplements existing sanctions under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989). Parents may be prosecuted for the original offence if the penalty is not paid.)

Source:

http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200295/schools_and_learning/2655/holidays_in_term_time_penalty_notices

Lateness

Lateness is often an indication of more serious problems, but can also be merely the result of poor time management. Our school expectation is that pupils arrive on time to school.

Parents also need to be kept informed if punctuality is a problem because often they will be unaware of this, having themselves left the home before the child is expected to go to school, or the child comes by themselves without a parent. When a child is late at St Matthew's they have to report to the office. If a child is late more than twice a week, the Deputy and EWO are informed and discuss this with parents.

Actions to promote good attendance

- ✓ Active curriculum
- ✓ Breakfast club
- ✓ After school clubs
- ✓ Excellent links with parents
- ✓ Prominently displayed attendance figures
- ✓ Regular mention of attendance in newsletters
- ✓ Class reward certificates for with the best attendance and best punctuality
- ✓ Individual reward certificates for 100% attendance every term
- ✓ Reward prizes for 100% attendance every academic year
- ✓ Termly reward for the class with the best attendance
- ✓ Target setting
- ✓ Attendance reports
- ✓ Using assemblies and parents meetings to draw attention to good attendance
- ✓ First day absence calling

Partnership with parents/carers and the community

At St Matthew's we firmly believe that parents/carers are essential partners in the education of their children and their responsibilities with regard to affecting regular attendance. Schools have a duty to keep parents informed about pupil attendance both on an individual basis and as a summary in the Governor's Annual Report to Parents.

At St Matthew's we keep parents informed about attendance through:

- School prospectus
- Newsletters
- Letters home
- Telephone calls
- School reports
- Parents evenings

The role of the Education Welfare Officer

- Fulfils the duty of the LA to enforce school attendance and where necessary to institute legal proceedings.
- Endeavours to ensure that all children are able to benefit fully from the educational opportunities that are available to them.
- Endeavours to ensure quality of access to services and assists in addressing the many disadvantages which may limit pupils' ability to develop their full potential.
- The designated officer for this school is Sally Beasley.

Additional Support

Additional support may, at times be required to support pupils and parents/carers in respect of attendance issues. This support may be accessed from a range of services through the named school contact.

School Contact: Mrs Bhavasia Patel

Services available

- Inclusion and Access
- Child Psychology
- Pupil referral and Exclusions
- Social Services
- Medical
- Learning Mentors
- SEMAP