

# POLICY FOR WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



This policy was reviewed and revised by Professional Associations, Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff and Curriculum Committee.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ April 2019 \_\_\_\_\_

Following agreed revisions, approved and adopted by Full Governing Body.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To be revised

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ September 2019 \_\_\_\_\_

This policy has been developed in the context of national government and Wigan Local Authority guidance.

### **Rationale**

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Highfield St Matthew's C of E Primary School takes seriously its responsibilities to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school and is committed to following the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

*'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and*
- (b) To any special educational needs he/she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.*

### **Aims**

- To promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- To promote positive attitudes towards good attendance and time keeping amongst both pupils and parents.
- To ensure that parents understand their legal responsibility in securing good attendance.
- To raise the awareness of the importance of good attendance and its impact on attainment and achievement.
- To ensure regular monitoring of all pupil attendance and punctuality, in line with Government and LA guidelines, thereby ensuring early intervention.
- To improve individual pupil and whole school attendance levels; to reduce the length and number of absence due to term time holidays, in line with government legislation September 2013.
- To use a range of reward systems to celebrate and reward pupils' attendance including, certificates for 100% attendance, attendance badges and end of year awards for 100% attendance.

### **Consultation**

This policy has been produced in consultation with representatives of all stakeholders, including pupils, parents, staff and governors.

### **Statements of expectations**

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act which aims to ensure parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, Start Well Service and Social Care where such a child's attendance is irregular.

**What is expected of parents and carers:**

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, on the first day of absence, either in person, by telephone or via the website before 9.30am. If an illness continues please update us every 48 hours with the child's progress. This information will be recorded on the register.
- To understand that if we have not heard from a parent/carer the learning mentor will contact the parent/carer later that day. If a child is absent on a subsequent day without us having had contact with the parent/carers we will try to reach other family members using information on the child's contact list; we would also carry out a home visit.
- To ensure that their child arrives to school on time and that a reason should be offered for any lateness.
- To work closely with the school and the Start Well Service to resolve any problems that might affect a child's attendance.
- To take annual family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused.
- To be aware of the importance of the school curriculum to their child and be careful to make sure their child attends school during important times such as SATs tests.
- To support their child and be proud of their successes and achievements.
- To understand that if a child is Looked After by a family they have a social worker, the social worker will be informed immediately of any unexplained absences.

School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and will promote good communication and co-operation between all those involved. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils during both morning and afternoon sessions. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

**What is expected of the school:**

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government.
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 Education Act.
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Start Well Service.
- To scrutinise the attendance of off-site provision to ensure children are attending & are safe.
- To inform the local authority of any children being removed from roll.
- To give parents details on attendance via the school website and newsletters on the school app.
- To celebrate individual and class achievements.
- To reward good or improving attendance.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Attendance Enforcement Team (AET) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The AET is the enforcement agency of

the LA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers they may also take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

- **The local authority will issue a penalty notice warning when a child has reached the 10 sessions unauthorised whether that be holidays in term time or any other unauthorised absences.**
- **If a child has further absences during the three week period following the warning the local authority will issue a fine.**

### **School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

Recording (See Appendix 1 for Attendance Codes)

- The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at 8.50am.
- At 9.00am the register is closed and all external doors are locked (for security reasons). Any late pupils need to enter the school through the main entrance.
- If a pupil arrives late they (or their parent) will be asked to inform office staff who will record a reason for lateness in the late book.
- A punctuality target will be set for a child who is repeatedly late (This will be done as part of an attendance meeting, held by Ms France or Mrs Rigby).
- All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late MUST register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.
- The register officially closes at 9.30am and any pupil arriving after 9.00am will be marked with an authorised late mark. Any pupil arriving after 9:30am may be marked with an unauthorised late mark. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school whether or not to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.
- Reasons for absence may be offered verbally via a message from an appropriate adult, by phone or via the school website. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence
- A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents/ carers who have not offered a reason and will mark the absence as unauthorised.

### **Monitoring**

The learning mentors will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a daily basis. In the case of any pupils identified as cause for concern or classed as a child with persistent absence (see below), a letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be causing poor attendance. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a two week period there appears to be no improvement the parents/carers of the pupil will be invited to a meeting. This will usually involve the head teacher and learning mentor, governor board and any other relevant agencies. At the meeting they will discuss the issue and try to address and resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending regularly. A plan and target will be put in place to help improve the child's attendance/punctuality. If the parent/carer does not attend the meeting, or if after such a meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve, a target will be put in place and a formal referral could be made to the Start Well Service. (appendix 2)

School half terms	Persistent Absence at 10%	Number of days off
September to October	7 or more sessions	3.5 days
September to December	14 or more sessions	7 days
September to February	20 or more sessions	10 days
September to Easter	25 or more sessions	12.5 days
September to May	31 or more sessions	15.5 days

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that help the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be used when needed to help the school to plan how to manage any attendance problem. The Start Well Service will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

### Reporting

Each term, the head teacher's report informs the Governing Body of attendance figures for the whole school.

Pupils' individual attendance figures are reported on their end of year reports and a leaflet for parents is also distributed that explains their responsibility and the school's procedures (Welcome packs contain attendance leaflets).

### Requests for leave of absence

#### Holidays in term time

The school has adopted the Local Authority Policy Guidance for Holidays during term time. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's/children's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take pupils away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made **6 weeks in advance** and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised in exceptional circumstances only.

Exceptional Circumstances include:-

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis e.g. bereavement or serious illness.

Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your Child/ren needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- At any time during Y6 due to assessment periods (SATS).
- Where a pupil's attendance rate has fallen below 95% for the previous term.

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave for a family holiday or other reason they are required to complete a Holiday request form (appendix 3), where required accompanied by supporting documentation and return it to the school. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time and the child/ren's current percentage of attendance. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register. In the majority of cases it is likely that such a request will be refused.

The head teacher/Learning Mentors will review both the request and information from the register and make a decision to approve the leave or to inform the parent that the leave request has been turned down, giving a reason for the decision.

**APPENDIX 1**

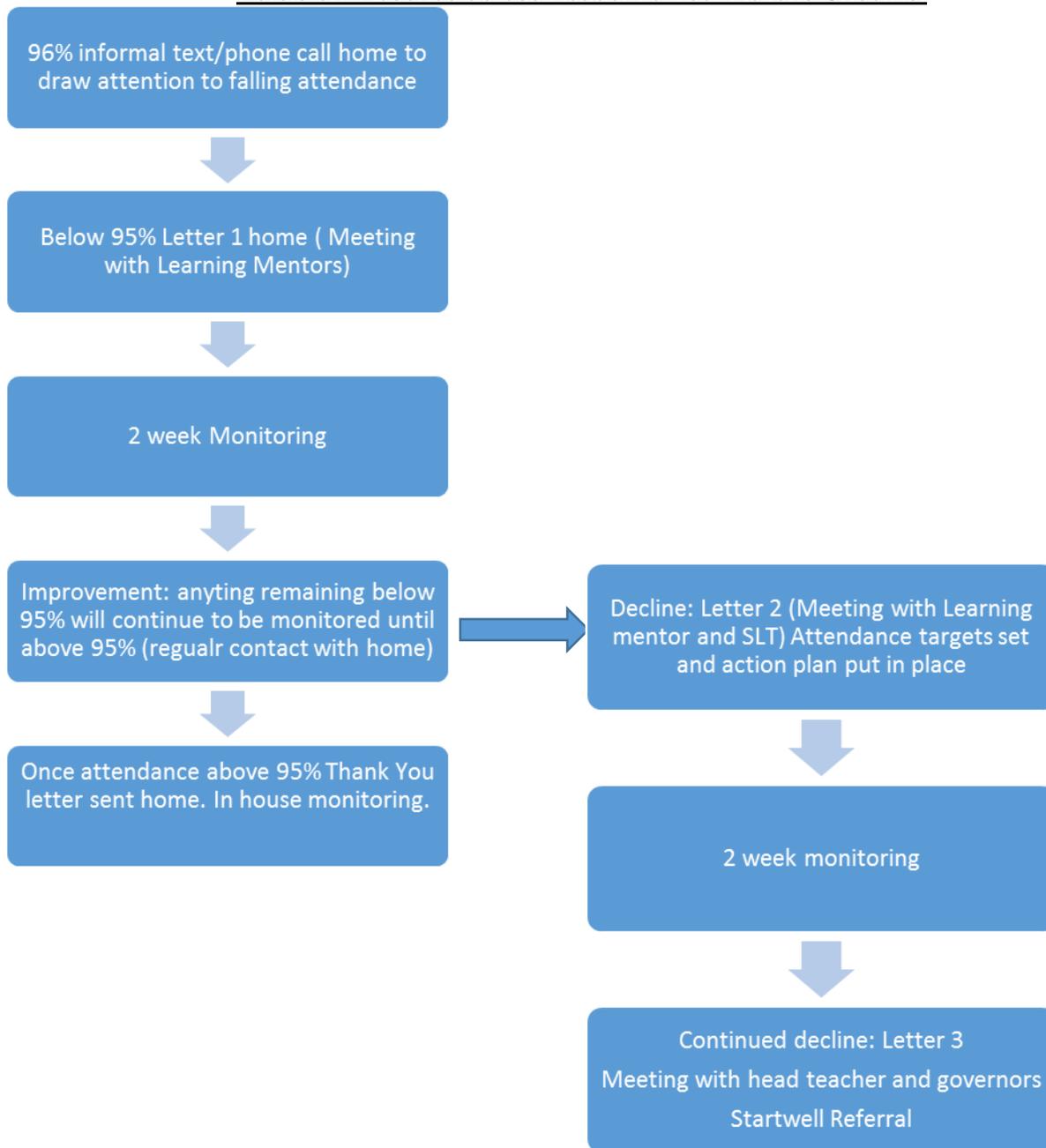
## Attendance codes

A set of standard codes is used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site	Present	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Present	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after reg closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit	Present	In for whole session
W	Work experience	Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	DFES# school closed to pupils	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Attending another institute	Present	Out for whole session
!	Non compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
#	Holiday for all	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
*	Not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

**APPENDIX 2**

Persistent Absence across Academic Year Actions Checklist



**APPENDIX 3****HOLIDAY REQUEST FORM**

A request for absence MUST be made a minimum of six weeks before the trip.

**PUPIL DETAILS**

Name:

Date of Birth:

Class/Teacher:

Dates of requested absence

Reason for absence

I understand that keeping my child off School for any longer than agreed or if my request is not granted, will result in the absence being recorded as Unauthorised. This may result in action being taken against me for Non School Attendance.

 Parent/Guardian  
name
   
.....

Signed

Date of request

The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave:-

- The pupil's previous attendance history
- The age of the pupil
- The child's stage of education
- Time of Year (SATS/exams)
- The nature/reason for the absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Holidays taken for the following reasons will not normally be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holiday;
- Availability of the desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday period;
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

Office use only

Seen by

Agreement

Date