

Attendance Policy

Updated: November 2024

Up for review: November 2027

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

We treasure each child and enable them to flourish, using their God-given potential, establishing a secure foundation for them to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

We are a 'Christ-centred school, with a child-centred curriculum' where wisdom and love guide and influence learning and teaching for our whole community.

RATIONALE

Regular attendance at school is a pre-requisite of a good education. The curriculum is carefully planned and assumes full attendance. Any child who does not attend school is placed at a disadvantage and life chances are therefore impaired.

The school recognises that it is the parents'/carers' legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school and teachers will play their part in ensuring maximum attendance of children at school.

Regular attendance and good punctuality reflects commitment, maximises potential educational achievement, and presents a positive public image for the school.

Truancy/unauthorised absence represents a significant waste of educational resources, puts children 'at risk', contributes to general disaffection and potential juvenile crime and thus should be a source of grave concern to parents/carers and teachers alike.

It is not enough for the school to assume that regular attendance is automatic and that absence is always an indication of home difficulties or lack of parental support. As a school we are committed to the idea that education is a life-long activity and thus the ethos of the school is that pupils should be happy to attend school.

AIMS

- 1 To enable maximum pupil attendance through promoting high attendance rates.
- 2 To encourage pupils to develop habits/routines that will ensure good punctuality and attendance beyond their school days.
- 3 To encourage pupils to take good advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly.
- 4 To recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and work in partnership with parents/carers and the Pupil Entitlement team / other agencies to address any difficulties.
- 5 To provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring of attendance.
- 6 To identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social/academic difficulties.



PRACTICE

1 The procedures for the completion of attendance records are that class teachers send registers to the School Office within 15 minutes of the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions, and office staff will then make contact with parents on the first day of any unexplained absence.

2 At the 'Meet the Teacher' meeting held in the first month of term all parents are informed about the importance of attendance and the impact on a child's learning if a child does not attend on a regular basis.

3 Class teachers are expected to keep accurate records of attendance; office staff will follow up absences and refer concerns to the Headteacher.

4 The Headteacher regularly analyses attendance across the school (at least half termly) and follows a clear procedure when attendance drops:

A standard letter is sent to parents when attendance falls below 92%, regardless of reason for absence. Where there is a specific reason (hospital visit, bereavement, holiday early in the academic year) discretion may be used in not sending a letter, but contact should be made via a telephone call to ensure parents are aware and to establish any support strategies that can be agreed.

A standard letter is sent to parents when the number of 'lates' to school reaches 10.

If attendance falls below 90% a second letter is sent to families, requesting they contact the school to discuss their child's attendance.

Where letters have been sent, and an improvement in the child's attendance is not evident, the Headteacher will usually contact the parent/carer by telephone to discuss the absence and offer reasonable support/advice in improving attendance. This may also involve discussions with the child.

When attendance falls below 85% (10 absences) the case is discussed with the Pupil Entitlement team at the termly meetings and a referral will usually be made, unless a specific reason negates the need for a referral (see above).

5 Authorisation for 'withdrawal from learning' for holidays, trips, visits, and other reasons will not be approved except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher.

6 The School Secretary will use the school's Bromcom system to monitor unauthorised absence, patterns of absence, lateness and absence of siblings. The School Secretary will manage the system to ensure records are up to date, correct codes are entered and first day contact made.

7 If a child is absent without authorisation for 10 days without explanation, the Pupil Entitlement team must be informed immediately. If the absence is an unauthorised holiday, the Pupil Entitlement team should be informed at the next meeting.

8 The Education and Inspection Act 2006 places a statutory duty on the Local Authority to establish the identities of children missing education.

If a child fails to start at school, enquiries should be made with Admissions to establish whether the child will be starting. The Admissions Assistant should also attempt to contact the family. The Pupil Entitlement team should be informed by the Attendance Leader. If a Common Transfer File (CTF) has been received by the school it should be uploaded to the S2S website.

When a family disappears, or a child ceases to attend for ten school days, without explanation, every effort will be made to trace the child by the school. Where the child's attendance is low, the



absence unexplained or unusual, or the child is deemed to be 'at risk', immediate contact should be made with the Pupil Entitlement team.

Any unexplained, continuous absence of any child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan must be automatically treated as the highest priority and the duty team of social and caring services contacted immediately.

9 Children can only be taken off roll when contact has been made by the receiving school and the CTF file transferred. All other reasons (disappearance, moving abroad/returning to home country) will necessitate contact and advice from the Pupil Entitlement team.

10 The school will encourage good attendance by:

- Informing parents of their child's attendance at Parents' Evenings. Class lists will be generated and given to teachers.
- Attendance percentages will be shared on the website.
- Request for Absence forms will be returned to parents showing the level of the child's attendance.
- Letters will be sent to parents annually, to inform them of their child's annual record of attendance.
- Prizes in the form of a sticker will be given for any class with 100% attendance for a whole school week.
- Certificates will be given to children who show good attendance regularly.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Headteacher will monitor and evaluate this policy.

See below for appendices:

First contact letter – below 92%

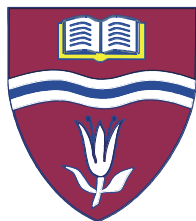
Letter 1 – below 90%

Letter 2 – continued absence

Persistent lateness

Term time holiday / leave of absence letter





St Mary's C of E Aided Primary School

A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum

Tel: 01798 872007
Email: office@st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk
Website: www.st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk

Link Lane
Pulborough
West Sussex
RH20 2AN



Headteacher: Mrs S Copus B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

FIRST CONTACT LETTER – below 92%

Date

Dear

RE – XXXXX's name

As part of our regular monitoring of all students, we have noticed that XXXX's attendance has fallen below 92% and currently stands at XX. Our attendance target for all pupils is 96%.

We appreciate that every situation is different and there may be specific issues or genuine reasons for these absences, however it is our policy to raise these concerns with you at this stage.

There is a great deal of current research available which clearly shows that even quite low levels of absence have a negative impact on academic achievement and attainment and we will therefore be monitoring XXXX's attendance in the coming weeks.

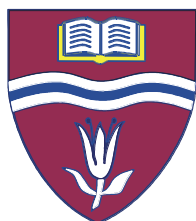
If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us and we would be more than happy to discuss your concerns.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs S Copus
Headteacher





St Mary's C of E Aided Primary School

A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum

Tel: 01798 872007
Email: office@st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk
Website: www.st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk

Link Lane
Pulborough
West Sussex
RH20 2AN



Headteacher: Mrs S Copus B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

LETTER 1 – below 90%

Date

Dear

Student: Name of student

DOB:

Following our recent correspondence, we have completed another attendance review and have noticed that PUPIL NAME's attendance currently stands below 90%, which is still below the school attendance target of 96%. Their attendance currently stands at% which is still below the school attendance target of 96%

There is a strong link between school attendance and academic attainment and St Mary's CE (Aided) Primary School are continually striving to raise standards. Therefore, PUPIL NAME is at risk of not achieving their full potential unless attendance improves.

Parents and carers are responsible by law for ensuring that their children attend school on a regular basis and are not absent without good reason. PUPIL NAME's attendance will now be monitored and we hope to see a significant improvement. If there is no improvement within the next few weeks and we do not hear further from you, we will have no alternative but to refer this matter to the Pupil Entitlement Team at the Local Authority, who may need to consider legal intervention. This could result in a fine or prosecution via the Magistrates Court under S444 (1) Education Act 1996.

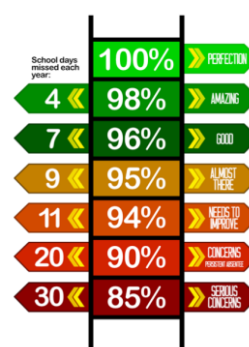
We welcome any contact to discuss ways that we can work together to improve your child's attendance and offer any support or advice you may require.

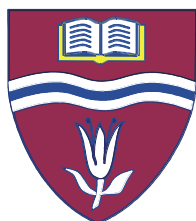
In the meantime, we will be monitoring XXX's attendance and hope to see an improvement as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

S Copus

Mrs S Copus
Headteacher





St Mary's C of E Aided Primary School

A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum

Tel: 01798 872007
Email: office@st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk
Website: www.st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk

Link Lane
Pulborough
West Sussex
RH20 2AN



Headteacher: Mrs S Copus B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

LETTER 2 – continued absence

Date

Dear

Student: Name of student

URGENT NOTICE

Further to our recent visit/meeting/letter, I am disappointed that PUPIL NAME's attendance has not improved and is still a cause for concern. Attendance currently stands at XX%

I am writing to advise you that if there are any further unauthorised absences, the case will be passed onto the Attendance Team at the Local Authority for legal intervention to be considered and you will be at risk of a fine and/or prosecution under S444 (1) Education Act 1996.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise.

Section 444 (1)(a) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. The Local Education Authority may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned.

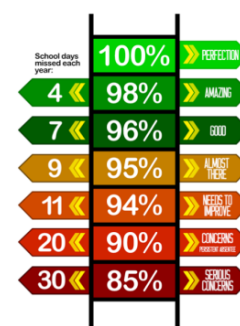
Poor attendance is taken very seriously at St Mary's CE (Aided) Primary School and research shows a clear link between absence and poor progress in schools and colleges.

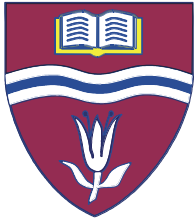
If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter, please contact the office on 01798 872007 to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

S Copus

Mrs S Copus
Headteacher





St Mary's C of E Aided Primary School

A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum

Tel: 01798 872007
Email: office@st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk
Website: www.st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk

Link Lane
Pulborough
West Sussex
RH20 2AN



Headteacher: Mrs S Copus B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

Persistent lateness

Date

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to bring to your attention a concerning pattern of lateness involving your child, PUPIL NAME, who has arrived after the registers have closed on multiple occasions. For clarification, the gates open each morning at 8:40am and close at 8:55am, with registers closing shortly afterwards.

As you may be aware, punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and regular lateness can have a significant impact on your child's learning and overall progress. In addition, arriving after the official close of registration is considered unauthorised absence, which can lead to further consequences. If this pattern continues, the matter may be referred to the local authority and you may be at risk of receiving a fine for non-compliance with attendance regulations.

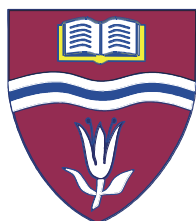
We understand that there may be challenges contributing to these late arrivals and we want to offer our support. If there are any difficulties or circumstances that are making it hard for your child to arrive on time, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would be happy to discuss how we can work together to improve the situation and support your family in ensuring your child's punctuality.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and we look forward to your child arriving on time, ready to learn.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Copus
Headteacher





St Mary's C of E Aided Primary School

A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum

Tel: 01798 872007
Email: office@st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk
Website: www.st-marys-pulborough.w-sussex.sch.uk

Link Lane
Pulborough
West Sussex
RH20 2AN



Headteacher: Mrs S Copus B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

Term Time Holiday / Leave of absence

Date

Dear

Student: Name of student
Attendance Percentage:

I am writing in response to your 'Request for Absence from Learning' form / letter / e-mail / telephone call requesting permission for PUPIL NAME to be absent from school on DATES.

OR if no request is received I am writing in response to PUPIL NAME's unauthorised absence from school on DATES, which we have reason to believe is due to a holiday during term time.

Government guidelines, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, prevent headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. **IF request received add the following**..... Your application has been considered by our Headteacher, but has unfortunately not been approved in this instance, as the circumstances are not seen as exceptional.

As a result, I must inform you that West Sussex County Council may be advised of this matter and could be requested to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice in line with their guidance to schools.

If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter, please contact the office on 01798 872007 to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

S Copus

Mrs S Copus
Headteacher

