The St Marylebone CE Bridge School
A Special Free School for pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs
17-23 Third Avenue, London W10 4RS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Committee:	**Governing Body**
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Required to publish on website?	**No**
Statutory:	**No**

1. Introduction

1.1 **The importance of regular school attendance**
Regular attendance at school plays a crucial part in ensuring the best possible outcomes for our pupils in all areas. We believe that missing out on education leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and ultimately to poorer outcomes. This is entirely consistent with the St Marylebone CE Bridge School's Church of England Ethos.

It is essential that all staff make pupil attendance a key priority. The School works tirelessly to maximize pupil attendance and reach attendance figures of 100%. The Governors' targets are to have a minimum of 95% attendance.

1.2 This policy is informed by the following documents:

– The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

– Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (Chapter 37)

– Attendance, Child Employment & Entertainment ("ACE") 'Elective home education and children missing education', a reference manual, 2013. Tri-borough Guidance.

– DfE Guidance: 'School attendance, Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities', November 2016

2. Registers

2.1 Registers must be taken using the online Google Sheet during morning form time sessions. It is essential that registers are completed by tutors in a timely fashion to ensure that the Attendance Officer (AO) can enter registers on SIMS and the Attendance Team can chase any absences.

2.2 The Attendance Team comprises: The Head of School (HoS), Deputy Head of School (DHoS), Head of KS3, Head of KS4, the Attendance Officer (AO).

2.3 If the Google Sheet is not accessible, a paper register must be taken. This must be taken to the AO at the earliest opportunity.

3. Clearing and coding absences

3.1 Clearing absences

If a pupil is not in school, it is the duty of their parents/guardians to telephone the School by 8:30am to explain the reason for absence. At 9.00am each day, the AO will:

(i) make a list of pupils who have not been marked as present in morning registration

(ii) remove from this list pupils whose parents have called to notify the School of their child's absence

(iii) telephone the parents/guardians of the other pupils on the list informing them that their child is missing from school and asking them to advise of the reason for their child's absence.

(iv) where the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the AO will leave a voicemail message if possible advising them that their child is missing from school and asking them to contact the school as a matter of urgency.

3.2 While going through messages from parents of pupils who are absent from school, the AO will 'clear' the absence by entering the relevant code in SIMS. Below are the codes to be used as advised by DfE guidance.

3.3 The AO will add a brief note to the notes section on SIMS for the relevant pupil to provide more detail about the reason for absence (e.g. Mum reports that X has a fever).

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity:

Code B	Off-site educational activity
Code D	Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
Code J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
Code P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
Code V	Educational visit or trip
Code W	Work experience

Authorised absence codes:

Code C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Only to be used by the Attendance Team
Code E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	NB: If a fixed-term exclusion is completed on site, '/' should be used
Code H	Holiday authorised by the school	Only to be used with explicit direction from Head of School Granted in exceptional circumstances where the request has been made in advance
Code I	Illness	The DfE guidance states; 'If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes
Code M	Medical or Dental appointments	Only to be used once AO has seen a medical note. AO can convert from 'I' to 'M'
Code R	Religious observance	
Code S	Study Leave	

Unauthorised absence codes:

Code G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.	The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided.	This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a

		reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed	

Administrative codes: The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census

Code X	Not required to be in school	This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend
Code Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	e.g. the school site is closed due to an unavoidable cause *(we are advised by the DfE to use Code X to record online attendance)*
Code Z	Pupil not on admission register	
Code #	Planned whole or partial school closure	INSET / School holidays

4. Pupils arriving in school after the close of registration

4.1 Pupils arriving in school after registration must report to reception. Receptionists will inform the AO of the pupils' arrival who will then enter these pupils as having arrived late via SIMS.

4.2 If a valid reason for lateness is provided by a parent or guardian, the AO will record the reason in SIMS via the comment box on the AM register.

4.3 For sanctions for poor punctuality see section 11.

5.   Absence without explanation

5.1   The AO will email the Admissions Team by 9.30am with a list of pupils absent from school and any reason provided. The AO will note any pupils whose parents have not yet responded to a call or voicemail message advising that their child is missing.

5.2   The HoS or DHoS will advise the AO if a text message should be sent to any of the parents/guardians who have not yet contacted the school. The AO will advise the Admissions Team via an email as and when parents/guardians respond to the text message.

5.3   The HoS or DHoS will consider the level of concern in any case where such contact is unsuccessful or inconclusive and assess the level of potential risk and escalate to Designated Child Protection Officer or external services as appropriate.

5.4   If a pupil is absent from school before or straight after a holiday the Head of the relevant KS must contact home. If contact cannot be made this must be referred to the DHoS.

6.   Authorised absence

6.1.   No pupil may leave school premises unaccompanied during school hours without one of the permissions outlined below:

(i)   A written notice from parent/carer advising of the time and date of the appointment. This should be given to the AO to mark in SIMS.

(ii)   Verbal permission of parents of pupils who have forgotten to bring in a note for their appointment. In this case the pupil will explain to the school office the reason for their absence; the school office will then call home to obtain permission, and ensure the pupil's attendance code is amended on SIMS accordingly

7.   Other absence requests during term-time

7.1   The School does not authorise holidays taken during school time and will inform the Westminster Attendance Manager of all unauthorised absence due to this. Parents/ carers will need to attend a meeting in school upon the pupil's return. A penalty notice of £60 may be issued by the Westminster Attendance Manager and could lead to your child losing their school place.

7.2   If parents/carers are considering taking their child out of school for a period during term-time due to personal reasons they must write to the HoS at least two weeks in advance of the requested absence.

7.3   In emergency situations parents should give as much notice to the School as possible as well as providing evidence of the travel booking to confirm the emergency nature of the visit. The request will be carefully considered.

7.4   The HoS will only authorise absence under this heading in exceptional circumstances. Such authorisation will be at the absolute discretion of the Head of School. It may be necessary to hold a meeting in school to discuss the circumstances surrounding the request. If the absence is authorised, it is the responsibility of the AO to change the note(s) on the pupil's record on SIMS.

7.5   If absence is not authorised and parents/carers take their child out of school regardless, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The School will notify the Westminster Attendance Manager, who will take action as appropriate, which may include a Penalty Notice).

7.4   If the request for leave is authorised and then the pupil does not return to school as expected following the period of authorised leave, the school will consult with the relevant professionals within the pupil's home borough. Where appropriate a Penalty Notice will be issued.

8.   Requests to participate in educational activities outside of school during school time

8.1   As a general policy, the School will not authorise absence from school to take part in activities outside of the school curriculum.

8.2   In exceptional circumstances the School will consider authorising a very limited absence. Such exceptional circumstances may include:

–   selection to represent London or the country in a regional or national event

–   attendance at a musical or arts examination

–   selection to perform / work on a professional film, television or theatre production or business

–   charity event

–   an opportunity that will offer a significant positive impact on the social, emotional development of the pupil

8.3   Such absences will only be authorised if the absence is considered (in the absolute discretion of the School) to have no detrimental effect either on the pupil's education or welfare or on the School and if the pupil:

–   has a strong attendance record (95% or above)

–   has a strong school behaviour record

8.4   Absence of this kind can only be authorised by the HoS or, in the absence of the HoS, DHoS.

8.5   Only in very exceptional circumstances will more than two days' cumulative absence in any one academic year be considered.

8.6   In addition to the above, these very exceptional cases will require a formal letter from the institution/organisation responsible for the event/production giving details of the activity, times and dates, including any educational provision involved.

8.7   As far as possible, the parents and School should seek to qualify the absence as "educated off-site".   The absence can be recorded as "educated off-site" if the activity includes:

- additional tuition / mentoring / coaching

- being taught skills which will have a direct positive bearing on the pupil's educational success

- development of personal, social, emotional or leadership skills which will have a direct positive bearing on the pupil's educational success.

8.9   Any absences which are requested but declined will be recorded as unauthorised.

8.10 See: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/regulation/6/made.   An approved educational activity *(see codes in table in para 3.3 above)* is:

(a) an activity which takes place outside the school premises and which is;

(i)   approved by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the School;

(ii)   of an educational nature, including work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996 (1) and a sporting activity; and

(iii) supervised by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor or the Head of School; or

(b) attendance at another school at which the pupil is a registered pupil.

9.   Attendance tracking

9.1   The DHoS will review the attendance tracking on a weekly basis and highlight to form tutors and Heads of KS pupils whose overall attendance for the year drops below 95%.

9.2   Each fortnight, the Heads of KS and the DHoS will meet to discuss attendance concerns through the Key Stage meetings. The following steps will be taken/considered as appropriate:

- request tutors to have a conversation with the pupil

- phone call home

- letter home with Westminster leaflets on Minor Sickness and Truancy as well as the pupil's attendance certificate

- parent/carer meeting with agreed actions and a review date

- home visit

- no longer authorise any absence without medical evidence

- School nurse referral

- Early Help Referral (where the pupil has more than 10% unauthorised absences or family require additional support to improve attendance)

- mentor meeting

- initiation of a mentor if this is not already in place

- a reduced timetable

- a referral for home tuition depending on the home borough's provision and thresholds

9.3   At the end of the meeting, the Heads of KS or DHoS will email the AO with a list of pupils who need letters home. The AO will send the relevant letters home and note the date that each letter was sent in the attendance spreadsheet.

10.   Rewarding good attendance

10.1 At the end of Terms 2, 4 and 6, the AO will print off a certificate for each pupil with 100% attendance over the two terms as well as for pupils who have significantly improved attendance. These are to be distributed by the Heads of KS to pupils during form time or assemblies.

11.   Punctuality

11.1 The AO will enter the number of minutes late a pupil arrives in the morning.

11.2 In their fortnightly meetings, the Head of KS and DHoS will go through the punctuality data from the past week and over the year as a whole to see if any pupils need to be progressed through the punctuality system. The following actions will be taken/considered as appropriate:

- Punctuality Report run by tutors

- A phone call home by the tutor

- A meeting or phone call between parent / carers and the Heads of KS

- Early Help Referral.

12.   Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of the tutor:

- Complete the register accurately in the Google Sheet, promptly by 8.50am

- If the Google Sheet is not accessible, a paper register must be completed and taken to the AO by the end of morning registration

- If a pupil brings in a note with permission to leave the school site early for a medical appointment, pre-enter the absence onto the Google Sheet and give the note to the AO

- Engage in individual conversations with pupils and/or contact parents to discuss attendance issues as directed by the Heads of KS or DHoS

- Liaise with Head of KS regarding attendance and punctuality concerns, and complete all Attendance and Punctuality reports

- Monitor irregular attendance and absence patterns and act upon them

- When appropriate, remind pupils and parents of their Attendance and Punctuality responsibilities

12.2   Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of the Attendance Officer

- Clear absences on a rolling basis, by entering the relevant codes on SIMS once a call or note has been received and enter a comment with the details of each absence – see section 3

- Where a pupil arrives late (not due to LA transport), note the number of minutes late on SIMS

- Ensure all pupils who arrive late or leave early have their absence recorded accurately on SIMS
- Monitor the list of parents who have not responded to absence calls and messages

- Send out letters to parents regarding attendance as requested by Head of KS or DHoS, using the relevant template

- Print attendance certificates and distribute to Heads of KS

12.3   Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of the Heads of KS:

- Monitor tutors to ensure they are taking registers accurately and on time

- Meet at least fortnightly with the DHoS through KS meetings, to discuss pupils who are persistent absentees, or who have poor attendance, and decide what stage of the policy to implement (parent letters, parent meetings, penalty notices)

- Run attendance and punctuality reports for pupils with poor punctuality

- Arrange meetings with parents when necessary

- Bring attendance concerns to fortnightly meetings with DHoS

- Liaise with and refer for Penalty Notices / to Westminster Early Help Team and the equivalent, relevant agencies in other boroughs as appropriate

- When a pupil is absent without explanation, assess the level of potential risk and escalate to external services as appropriate

- When a pupil is absent directly before or after a school holiday without explanation, contact home and if contact cannot be made refer to the DHoS.

12.4 Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of class teachers:

- Be vigilant for pupils truanting lessons, by keeping an eye out for pupils who have been marked as present earlier in the day but who are not in their lesson; class teachers should ask the pupil why they were absent and check with other members of staff that their reason is valid

- Call the **person who is on duty in the Referral Room** if a pupil was present earlier in the day but is now absent from your lesson without explanation

- Issue a warning if a pupil arrives late to your lesson without good reason

12.5 Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of parents/carers

- Encourage their child to attend and have a positive attitude to attending

- Ensure that their child leaves home in time to arrive punctually for school

- Inform the School on **each day** of absence by calling the School and leaving a voicemail. If they fail to do so they will receive a call from the School

- Try to make medical appointments out of school hours. An appointment card or hospital letter or copy of email/text message should be brought into school if a pupil has to attend a medical appointment during school time

- Parents/carers should not, except with prior permission, keep their child away from school for anything other than illness

- Not book holidays in term time. The School does not authorise holidays taken during school time

- If absence is planned, a letter should be written to the Head of School, outlining the reasons for the absence. This should be done at least two weeks prior to the planned absence

12.6 Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of pupils:

- Arrive punctually to school every day. Failure to do so may result in sanctions being issued and escalated sanctions if poor punctuality persists

- If they arrive at school after 8:30am, report to reception in accordance with Health and Safety requirements

12.7 Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of the Deputy Head of School:

- Review any requests for planned absence with the HoS and inform tutors, Heads of KS and AO of the outcome of any such requests

- Meet at least fortnightly with the Heads of KS to look at attendance and punctuality concerns

- Communicate to AO where a letter needs to be issued to parents/carers relating to attendance or punctuality

- Provide guidance and support to Heads of KS as and when necessary

- Monitor overall progress in improving attendance and punctuality and take action if progress is not being made

- Liaise and consult with Westminster Attendance Manager and the relevant Professionals in other boroughs as appropriate to discuss procedures in relation to Penalty Notices

- Meet with LINK Early Help Practitioner on a termly basis to discuss attendance issues.

This policy is available on request and will appear on the School's website: www.stmaryleboneschoolbridgeschool.com.