



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Committee:	Governing Body
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Statutory:	Yes

1. Introduction

1.1 The importance of regular school attendance

Regular attendance is fundamental to ensuring positive outcomes for all pupils. Consistent attendance supports academic achievement, social development, and long-term success. At The St Marylebone CE Bridge School, our ethos prioritizes creating a safe, supportive, and inspiring environment where attendance is a shared responsibility among pupils, parents, and staff.

We aim for a minimum attendance target of 95%, aspiring toward 100%. This aligns with our Church of England ethos and commitment to maximizing pupil potential and fostering an inclusive and thriving school culture.

1.2 This policy is informed by the following documents:

- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Department for Education: "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" (2024)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children missing education (2024)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions (2015, updated 2017)

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), the Attendance Champion who is the 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).

Colour	Description
	Present
	Authorised absence
	Approved Educational Activity - Counted as Present
	Unauthorised Absence
	Not Counted in Attendance Calculations

Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave

T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work e
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances

#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

4. Pupils arriving in school after the close of registration

4.1 The school day begins at 8.30am with morning registration. Pupils and families should make best endeavours to ensure that pupils arrive for 8.30am. The register closes at 9.00am. If pupils arrive between after 8.30am but before the register closes at 9.00am, they will be marked as 'L' (late) in the register. If pupils arrive after 9.00am without a valid reason then they will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence) as their attendance is considered not accounted for.

Afternoon registration takes place at 3pm and closes at 3.15pm. All pupils present in school must be registered in the afternoon registration session.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 For sanctions for poor punctuality see section 12.

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 without notice, the Head of the relevant KS must contact home. If contact cannot be made this must be referred to the DHoS or the DSL.

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. Religious Observance

7.1 A pupil may be absent from school for religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves).

- (l) As a general rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which

they belong to stay away from their employment in order to record the occasion. If
in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about
whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

8. Other absence requests during term-time

- 8.1 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 £80 per parent, per child (if paid within 21 days) may be issued by the Westminster Attendance Manager and could lead to your child losing their school place.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 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).
- 8.6 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.

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

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

9.2 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
- an opportunity that will offer a significant positive impact on the social, emotional development of the pupil

9.3 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

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

9.5 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.

9.6 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.

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

9.8 See: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/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.

10. Attendance tracking

10.1 The DHoS will review the attendance tracking regularly and highlight to form tutors and Heads of KS pupils where a pupil's overall attendance for the year drops below 95%.

10.2 Each half term, the Heads of KS and the DHoS will meet to discuss attendance concerns. 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

11. Rewarding good attendance

11.1 At the end of each half term, the AO will print off a certificate for each pupil with 100% attendance over the half term as well as for pupils who have significantly improved attendance or excellent attendance (designated as 98% +). These are to be distributed in the Celebration Assembly as appropriate.

12. Punctuality

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

12.2 In their half termly meetings, the Head of KS and DHoS will go through the punctuality data for the term 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.
- A referral for a Penalty Notice where a pupil's persistent lateness after the register closes has contributed to 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a 10 week period. See Section 14 for further information.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

13.1 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

13.2 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

13.3 Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of the Heads of KS:

- Monitor tutors to ensure they are taking registers accurately and on time
- Meet at least half termly with the DHoS, 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 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.

13.4 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 Reset 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

13.5 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

13.6 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

13.7 Attendance and punctuality responsibilities of the Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is Claire Brooks, Deputy Head of School. She is contactable on the main school telephone number and by email c.brooks@stmarylebonebridgeschool.com

In alignment with the Department for Education's (DfE) August 2024 guidance, the Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

(i) Strategic Oversight and Leadership:

- Leading the school's attendance strategy to ensure alignment with national expectations and guidance.
- Setting ambitious yet achievable attendance targets in collaboration with senior leaders.
- Ensuring attendance data is reviewed regularly and used to inform decision-making and interventions.

(ii) Staff Support and Development:

- Providing guidance and training to staff on effective attendance management practices.
- Supporting tutors and Heads of Key Stage (KS) in addressing attendance concerns with pupils and parents.

- Collaborating with the Attendance Officer (AO) to ensure accurate and timely record-keeping.

(iii) Engagement with Pupils and Families:

- Acting as a visible advocate for excellent attendance within the school community.
- Leading meetings with parents/carers for pupils with persistent absence concerns, focusing on supportive and constructive dialogue.
- Coordinating home visits and Early Help referrals when attendance issues persist.

(iv) External Partnerships:

- Liaising with local authority attendance officers and other external agencies to address barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring compliance with statutory responsibilities, including penalty notices and referrals to external services when necessary.

(v) Monitoring and Reporting:

- Regularly monitoring attendance trends across the school to identify patterns and address areas of concern.
- Reporting to the Governing Body on attendance performance and strategies implemented to improve attendance.
- Reviewing any requests for planned absence with the HoS and inform tutors, Heads of KS and AO of the outcome of any such requests.
- Preparing termly attendance reports in collaboration with the Head of School and AO.

14. Persistent and severe absence

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.

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14.1 Penalty Notices

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. The threshold is 10 sessions (1 session is equivalent to a half day) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

15. Absence due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND and/or disabilities

15.1 Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place

- and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)
- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

15.2 Home Learning

Arrangements for formal home learning will take place in the following circumstances:

- A pupil has a medical need that requires them to stay home from school for a period of more than 3 days.
- A pupil has medical needs that mean they cannot attend school for the whole school day.
- A pupil is well enough to learn, but they are advised to remain off of school due to other factors, e.g. self-isolating.

Home learning is a partnership between the parent, pupil and school. Each person has a responsibility towards the success of this partnership to ensure that the education of the pupil is supported whilst the pupil is unable to attend school.

This policy is available on request and will appear on the School's website:

www.stmaryleboneschoolbridgeschool.com.