



St Helen's
Primary Academy
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Attendance Policy 2023

St Helen's seeks to ensure that all its children receive an education which maximises opportunities for each child to reach his or her full potential. Research shows a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment.

We aim to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to strive towards every child reaching a minimum of **97%** attendance and impeccable punctuality to ensure that each child can get the best out of the educational opportunities provided.

By working in partnership with parents and other agencies we are able to ensure that we have clear and robust strategies in place to manage and promote regular attendance and punctuality for all children across the trust.

In order to manage and promote regular attendance St Helen's Primary Academy will;

- Keep parents updated on attendance and via letters home, newsletters, social media and the website.
- Report to parents on how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this, via regular parent evenings and letters home.
- Celebrate good and improved school attendance and reward this through competitions, prizes, certificates and events.
- Monitor individual children's attendance.
- Review attendance on a weekly basis and identify any child falling below **97.0%**.
- Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance by following the procedure below.

1) First Day Absence. If a child is absent and the school has received no notification school staff will make contact with home either by phone or text message. In cases where no communication has been established, the PSA will visit or school will collect the required information by sending a letter home.

2) Below average attendance below **97%**. Parents will receive their first letter home to inform them of potential concern. If attendance fails to improve, parents may be contacted by the Pastoral Support (PS), attendance officer (AO) or Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to be offered support.

3) Well below average attendance below 95%. Parents will receive their second letter home, and will be required to provide medical evidence to ensure any absences are authorised. It is envisaged that at this level the PS and AO will already be involved and the EWO will become involved where needed.

4) Persistent Absence below 90%. An Internal Attendance Panel meeting will be conducted. The Parent, PS, AO, EWO and Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will discuss absence and agree a programme of support.

5) The academy will also inform the LA of persistent absentees and this may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Absences

Parents are expected to inform the school of the reason for absences, however, it is the school that makes the decision whether to authorise or not to authorise the absence. School will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards, medication or application for leave of absence will assist schools in making this decision.

Recurring unauthorised absence will be referred to the Pastoral team for further investigation and this may result in a fine.

Request for leave of absence in term time

St Helen's Primary Academy has adopted the BMBC Local Authority and Lift school's policy in respect of Leave of absence in term time.

- Parents are required to request a Leave of Absence form from the attendance officer (Mrs Leishman) in person.
- No Leave of absence form will be sent home with a pupil.
- On requesting the form the parent will be notified that only in exceptional circumstances will the absence be authorised, all other reasons will result in the leave of absence being unauthorised.
- Parents will be made aware that if they go ahead with the leave of absence when unauthorised, they may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice issued through the Local Authority. Per child, this will be £60 if paid within 21 days; payment after this time but within 28 days is £120. Failure to pay a fixed Penalty Notice will render you liable to criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.
- The leave of absence request will be considered with individual circumstances taken into account. The Headteacher/chair of governors (in exceptional circumstances) will make the decision to approve or not approve the request.
- Parents will be notified of this decision within 7 days of the request being received by school.
- Leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

In instances where parents do not complete a Leave of Absence form, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

Absence for participation in Non Compulsory Education (Nursery)

In these instances St Helen's Primary Academy will follow BMBC Local Authority guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with Education Welfare Service to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law.

In order to manage Non Compulsory Age Children's Absence St Helen's Primary Academy will;

- Undertake first day absence call in respect of any non-compulsory school child where the parent has not contacted school with reason for absence.
- Include in our school information for parents leaflet, the need for parents to contact school with a reason for absence when the child is unable to attend.
- Accurately record all information on reasons for absence, both that which is provided by the parent, contact in school and the information gathered when making first day absence calls on the individual pupil file.
- Monitor individual pupil's attendance.
- Review attendance on a weekly basis and identify any child falling below 97%.
- Work in partnership by offering support for parents to ensure children make a good start to their education and can learn to enjoy all that school offers by;
 - 1) Developing a positive relationship between Early Years staff and parents.
 - 2) PS and AO to contact parents to encourage them to engage with the support that school can offer to help their child attend well.
 - 3) If persistent absence occurs, attendance patterns emerge or concerns are raised by Early Years staff an internal attendance panel will be conducted (in extreme cases this could result in you being asked to give up your place in the nursery).

In order to manage and promote the regular attendance of their children St Helen's Primary Academy asks parents to;

- Impress on their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Establish effective communication with class teachers, PS, attendance officer, Head teacher and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school, so that we can work together to resolve this.
- Contact the school office on the 1st day of absence to inform school of the reason for absence and when the child is expected to return, keeping school informed daily if the absence is likely to continue so that school and partner agencies can ensure that amendments or alternatives can be made to provision if required.
- Provide school with any medical appointment cards, and wherever possible make appointments out of school hours, where this is not possible parents will ensure that children attend prior to or following their appointment.
- Attend any meetings called by school and partner agencies to discuss attendance.

In order to manage and promote punctuality St Helen's Primary Academy will; (the daily schedule will revert back to the below until then please see amended start and finish times)

- Record any children who attend school late and how many minutes late.

Registration

St Helen's Primary Academy

8.45am - FS1 doors open

8.45am – FS2 doors open

8.45am – school doors open (all children will be greeted by their teacher on their designated playground – no parents will be allowed into classrooms).

8.50 am - All doors close.

Any children arriving after these times should report to reception so that they can be given a late mark. children arriving late should be accompanied by a parent so that a reason for lateness can be given. The number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival.

- Monitor individual pupil's punctuality in order to identify where there may be issues.
- Notify parents when we are worried about their child's punctuality by:
 - 1) After 3 late marks, in a half term, a letter will be sent home with details of the incidents of late attendance, including how many minutes the pupil has been late.
 - 2) The AO/PS will become involved to support children and parents to improve punctuality.
 - 3) The AO/PS will discuss matters of punctuality and the families being supported with the Headteacher.
 - 4) If lateness continues the Head and LA will become more involved and meet with parents to discuss punctuality and agree a programme of support.
 - 5) For instances of persistent late attenders an internal punctuality panel meeting may be necessary.

In situations where all other strategies have failed to improve punctuality a £60 fine can be enforced by the Local Authority.

We have also adopted the BMBC Local Authority policies on Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education.

All these policies have been endorsed by our Governors, who support the trust in all attempts to improve the attendance and safeguarding agenda.