

ST TERESA'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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# Attendance Policy



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## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2018-2019**

St Teresa's Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, St Teresa's believes a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, and the link this has to achievement and attainment.

St Teresa's Primary School promotes early intervention and prevention of poor attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **School Procedures**

### **Absence**

The school is required by law to maintain an attendance register. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of Compulsory School Age, who are on the school's admission roll. The attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session and afternoon session.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity.

Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as 'no reason given' and a phone call made to the parents, followed by a letter if a reason is still not obtained.

On the first day of absence parents should email the school to inform them why their child is unable to attend and how long they are expected to be absent. The school is then able to mark the register appropriately as either an authorised or unauthorised absence. The decision to authorise or unauthorise absence rests with the school.

If a child is absent from school, he/she should not be on the school site during the day of the absence.

### **Lateness**

#### Reception – Y6

Morning registration opens at 8.50am and closes at 9.00am. All pupils should be in school by 8.50am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late. If they arrive after 9.20am, without an acceptable reason they will be marked as having an absence. Pupils who arrive late following an early morning appointment should bring evidence of this, e.g. an appointment card. If at all possible appointments should be made outside school hours. If this is not possible, children should be out for the minimal amount of time required for the appointment.

The afternoon registration is 1.00pm for Reception and KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2.

Nursery morning registration is 8.35am and afternoon registration is 12.20pm.

### **Ten Day's Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, in a term will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Officer. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

## **Frequent Absence**

Registers are monitored regularly by the school staff and Education Welfare Officer to identify any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem, depending on severity, using strategies such as:

- Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher talking to parent/child letter from the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher
- A meeting with the Headteacher
- A referral to the Education Welfare Officer

Where attendance falls below 90%, the school may request medical evidence (and provide parents with guidance on acceptable examples of medical evidence) for all future illness absences. The school will also refer the child to the School Nurse or the Specialist nurse in the Education Welfare Service if there is a high level of absence for medical reasons. If medical evidence as requested is not provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. A high level of unauthorised absence will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

For pupils with appropriately evidenced illness, the school will follow appropriate protocols to offer support.

## **A Welcome Back**

It is important that, where appropriate, on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include a discussion about the best way for the child to catch up on missed work where appropriate and be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## **Absence Notes**

Parents will no longer send in absence notes but the email received will be retained for the academic year.

## **Promoting/improving attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. Parents will be regularly informed of attendance information. The school will use a range of strategies and incentives to improve attendance

## **Exceptional Leave of absence**

The Governors of St Teresa's Primary School believe that leave of absence should be avoided if at all possible as it can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. Only in exceptional circumstances, where sufficient evidence is provided to substantiate the circumstances, will any absence from school be authorised.

The school policy is as follows:

- 1) The exceptional Leave of Absence form is available on the school website. A copy should be emailed to the pupil absence email: **absence@st-teresas.merton.sch.uk**.
- 2) The request must include the reason why it is necessary to take such absence during term time, including exceptional circumstances, including evidence such as a medical certificate. For an emergency trip, evidence of last minute booking of flights may be asked for.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. Without the appropriate evidence, all leave of absence will be unauthorised. A notification outlining the decision of the school (whether absence is authorised or unauthorised) via email within 10 working days.

A decision on whether or not to authorise absence will take into consideration:

1. Child's current attendance level;
2. Child's current academic achievement and attainment;
3. Specific circumstances contained in the request for leave of absence.
4. The following circumstances are commonly authorized:
  - Approved representative sporting activities
  - Family emergencies where families have to travel immediately
  - Approved drama/music activities
  - Family funeral
5. The following circumstances are commonly unauthorised:
  - Extended holidays
  - Long weekends
  - Holidays in term time
  - Anniversary celebrations/memorials

## **Attendance Awards**

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

- Weekly class attendance award and sticker per child.
- Termly class awards for classes with the best attendance.
- Daily rewards for children whose attendance is improving significantly.

## **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. Progress towards these targets will be analysed regularly by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and strategies adopted in line with this policy will be implemented to achieve or exceed the target. It is the responsibility of the parents, staff and pupils at St Teresa's Primary School to ensure good attendance and achievement of targets.

**Our school's Attendance targets for 2018/2019 are:**

School Target 96%
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LEA Target 96.0%
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## Appendix 1

### 1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable;

- To their age, ability and aptitude
- To any special needs they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:  
The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

## Appendix 2.

### Categorisation of Absence

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

#### **1. Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

#### **2. Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

#### **3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

## Appendix 3. ABSENCE OF CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL

### Introduction

The Local Education Authority expects all parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school whenever possible. Absences due to holidays taken during term time, could hinder academic progress.

Nationally, Government Policy is insisting that schools minimise the amount of teaching and learning time lost as a result of absence during term time and schools are now expected to adopt a more challenging response to requests for leave of absence for holiday in term time.

Department for Children Schools and Families guidance clearly states that time off for family holidays is not a right and recommends headteachers use their discretion to grant leave sparingly.

Absence of children from school falls into two categories, authorised and unauthorised. Figures for both types are published annually.

**Authorised absence** is recorded when children are:

- prevented from attending by sickness;
- prevented from attending by unavoidable causes (including the non-availability of LEA provided transport);
- given permission by the Headteacher to miss school following the submission of a request for special leave of absence

**Unauthorised absence** is recorded when:

- children arrive at school after the register closes and the absence cannot be authorised as above;
- there is no notification from a parent or carer as to the reason for absence;
- the Headteacher has been unable to authorise a request due to the circumstances described below.

### Leave of Absence

- ❖ Parents and carers are advised that requests for leave of absence for holidays will not be authorised unless there are "exceptional circumstances".
- ❖ The following circumstances are commonly authorised:
  - Approved representative sporting activities.
  - Family emergencies where families have to travel immediately.
  - Approved drama/music activities.
  - Family funeral..
- ❖ The following circumstances are not commonly authorised:
  - Extended holidays.
  - Long weekends.
  - Holidays in term time.
  - Anniversary celebrations/memorials.
- ❖ If permission has not been granted, then any leave taken will be recorded as unauthorised. Any unauthorised absence will appear in both the school register and in your child's report. Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and possible legal proceedings.
- ❖ If the absence is authorised by the Headteacher, you will be advised as to how many days have been approved

# Leave of Absence Form

I request that (Name of Child) { } Class { }

be granted leave of absence from school from (Date){ } to  
(Date) { }

Reason for absence:

The circumstances are:

Signed { } Date { }

## **FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

**Request for leave of absence** for Class

- The school will authorise leave of absence as above.
- The school will not authorise leave of absence as above. Therefore, please note that if you take your child out of school this will appear as an unauthorised absence on their school record.