



Parent and Carer's Guide to Attendance at St Marks Church of England Academy

For a child to reach their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. Research shows pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and 4 have higher rates of attendance.

Our ultimate goal as a school is to have 100% attendance for all pupils. However, we understand that some absences from school are unavoidable, therefore our school's overall attendance goal for this academic year is **97%**.

Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

This guide contains key information for you as Parents/Carers surrounding attendance and punctuality.

What you can do, as a parent/ carer to help your child achieve maximum attendance

- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance (not a holiday)
- discuss the importance of good attendance at home
- celebrate good or improving attendance with your child

Opening and registration times

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:25 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30 and will be kept open until The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45 and will be kept open until 12:50

What to do if you child is unexpectedly absent

- 1) You **must** inform the school by calling Ms Drewett, our Attendance Manager on 020 8685 6674 or via email DDrewett@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk as early as possible on the first day of absence before 8:30
- 2) Provide written confirmation via email or a note on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

How to request a leave of absence

Headteachers will only grant a leave of absence during term time under exceptional (rare, significant, or unavoidable) circumstance for an event that could not reasonable be scheduled for another time. The length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised is at the Headteacher's discretion.



To request a leave of absence you need to complete a leave of absence request form which you have obtain on our website or by emailing DDrewett@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised - see the section below on legal sanctions.

What will happen if your child is absent, and you have not informed the school

We will

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence, by 9:30 if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child’s safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- If absence continues on the second day, then a second attempt to call will be made.
- If absence continues for a third day, then the school will make a home visit. If no contact is made, then a letter will be left.
- Where appropriate, a request for a safe and well check conducted by the Police/Police Community Support Officer will be made. If a Social Worker is involved with the family, then they will be informed. If there are concerns relating to safeguarding, then a Children’s Social Care (CSC) referral will be made.
- We will invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer and/or pastoral leaders or senior member of staff if absences persist.
- We will refer the matter to the local authority if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Persistently Absent Children

We understand that some absence is unavoidable due to chronic illness for example. However, if a child’s attendance drops to 90% or below so has misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined by government as *persistent absentees*.

If your child has been absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90%, we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will discuss the best way to improve. If your child is reluctant to come to school for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact us so we can work together to tackle the problem.

Legal Sanction

Schools and Local Authorities can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- a number of unauthorised absences, including lateness, occurring within a term
- any incidences of holiday in term time without permission
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Important Contact Information

Senior Leader responsible to Attendance: Nicola van Zyl, Director of Inclusion

If you would like more information or detailed support on attendance, please contact Deana Drewett DDrewett@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk or your child's coach or progress leader. Details can be found on the school website

