



St. Mark's RC Primary School

Attendance Policy

At St. Mark's, our vision is to inspire success, as a community of faith and love, where high-quality relationships lead to high quality learning.

Rationale

This Attendance Policy outlines to pupils, staff, parents and carers of St Mark's RC Primary School the procedures for the management and promotion of positive attendance and timekeeping.

This policy has been developed in line with the Scottish Government's ***Included, Engaged and Involved*** guidance (2019).

Aims

The aim of St Mark's RC Primary School's Attendance Policy is to ensure:

- That all children and young people are supported in accessing a full education through positive attendance and timekeeping.
- Parents are provided with key information with regards to school absences, and are provided with the relevant support when required.
- School staff can uphold their professional responsibilities in monitoring attendance and can take appropriate action with regards to attendance concerns.

Role of Parents & Carers

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school until he or she reaches school leaving age (section 30 Education (Scotland) Act 1980). In the event of an absence, parents are asked to contact the school office by 9.15am to let us know the reason. Through regular attendance monitoring, parents are contacted if we have concerns about their child's attendance.

Is it ever okay for my child to be off school?

Your child may be off school if:

- They are ill
- They are attending a doctor or hospital appointment.
- They are going to a meeting about a Children's Hearing, care review, or court.
- If they are involved in an activity which is pre-authorised by us.
- Someone close to your child has died.
- There is a crisis or serious difficulty at home or in your family.
- They are going to a religious ceremony or a wedding of someone very close to them.

- You are a Gypsy/Traveller family and while you go travelling you keep in touch with your child's teacher.
- Your family is returning to a country of origin for cultural reasons or to care for a relative.

As long as you have informed us of the reason why your child is off, and we are satisfied that this is a valid reason, these would be called **authorised absences**.

If we feel that the reason given for your child's absence is not valid and does not fit into one of the above categories, then this will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**.

If you know that your child will be off school, for example if they have an appointment, it is important for you to inform us in advance.

If your child is off school because of a long-term illness or condition, we will make arrangements alongside our Additional Support for Learning Team to ensure your child can keep learning. In such instances, we ask that parents discuss this with us as soon as possible.

What happens when my child is off school?

Unless you have already explained your child's absence, we will contact you to try to find out why your child is not at school.

In the first instance we will telephone using you using the contact details provided to us. It's extremely important that these are kept up to date. If we are unable to get in touch with you, we will attempt to contact your child's wider emergency contacts. If we are then still unable to establish your child's whereabouts, or we have ongoing concerns, we will then contact Social Care Direct.

Can I find out how many absences my child has had?

Pupils with attendance below 90% will receive monthly letters highlighting the attendance percentage.

If you have not received a letter and would like to request a copy of your child's attendance, please contact the school office who will provide you with a printed overview.

What about family holidays during term-time?

We will not normally give a family permission to take pupils out of school for holidays during term-time. This means that if your child is off school because you are away on holiday we will record this as an **unauthorised absence**.

There are some circumstances where permission might be given for a holiday during term-time. This would include when:

- A family needs time together to recover from distress.
- A family holiday is restricted to term-time because of the parent's job (for example a parent is in the armed services or emergency services).
- Other exceptional circumstances (reviewed on a case-by-case basis).

If you believe that your holiday fits into one of the above categories, then please contact the Head Teacher to discuss this further.

What is truancy?

If your child stays off school without permission and without good reason this is called truancy. Truancy can happen when a pupil doesn't attend for just a part of the day, or for the whole day.

In instances of truancy we will work in partnership with parents and children to identify causes and solutions.

What will happen if the school have any concerns about my child's attendance?

The Head Teacher has a responsibility to monitor attendance across the whole school. If your child's attendance falls beneath 90% then you will be contacted by the Head Teacher to notify you of this and to offer support.

In instances where absence does not improve despite letters, meetings or offers of support, the decision may be made for a referral to the Education Wellbeing Service or Social Care Direct, with a view to improving attendance.

Role of Teaching Staff

Teaching staff have the responsibility of monitoring and recording absences and late coming at class level. To ensure that children are safeguarded and that absences are picked up upon quickly, teaching staff will adhere to the following:

- Record attendance on both SEEMIS and the class paper register every morning before 9.15am and every afternoon by 1.30pm.
- Ensure that the class register is kept with the class at all times as they move around the school. During RCCT, the register should be handed over to the

covering teacher. If a teacher is unable to locate a register, this should be raised promptly with office staff.

Role of School Office Staff

Office staff are crucial in communicating key information about absences to teaching staff as well as the senior leadership team. To ensure this, office staff will complete the following:

- Inform class teachers of reasons for absence when they have received communication from parents/carers, and update SEEMIS accordingly.
- Attempt to contact parents and carers in instances where children have not arrived in school by 9.30am (or 1.30pm where children go home for lunch).
- Alert the senior leadership team to any absences deemed as concerning so that appropriate action can be taken (e.g. contacting attendance officer).
- Enter attendance data into SEEMIS system and print out key overviews to support the senior leadership team with attendance monitoring.

Role of Senior Leadership Team

The Head Teacher, with support from the Principal Teacher, holds overall responsibility for promoting positive attendance as well as monitoring this across the school. This is undertaken through:

- Promoting positive relationships and developing a whole school ethos and culture in which children feel safe and happy in school.
- Seeking innovative ways to engage parents and carers in life of the school and develop key relationships to support good attendance.
- Ensuring that key messages about the importance of positive attendance is communicated with parents and carers.
- Carrying out monthly attendance monitoring across the school, tracking learners' attendance over time and keeping record of steps taken to improve and support this.
- Ensuring that concerns linked with attendance are escalated appropriately, through working in partnership with the Attendance Officer, Social Work Department and Attendance Council.

For children whose attendance falls below 90%, the following steps are taken:

1. Initial letter with print out attendance overview sent to parents/carers alerting them of their child's attendance.
2. If no improvement, second letter sent asking parents to telephone/make an appointment to meet with Head Teacher to discuss ways to support attendance.
3. If problem persists, Head Teacher will link with Educational Welfare Service.
4. If there is still no improvement, a letter sent to parents/carers stressing ongoing concerns and a meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.

Where late coming occurs regularly, letters will also be sent out to parents/carers and support is offered to improve the situation. If late coming is deemed as an ongoing issue, a meeting with parents/carers will be arranged alongside letter three.

Review of Policy

Attendance policy will be reviewed during session 2025-2026