



ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD

Attendance Policy and Procedure

September 2026

Reviewed: September 2026
Next Review Date: January 2027

MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's School seeks to provide an outstanding education firmly founded on the Catholic Faith.
Spiritual and moral principles are nurtured in a way that is reflected in daily life.

Within a happy and caring environment and based on the recognition of the dignity, worth and wellbeing of each child, high standards are expected. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence.

St Mary's values the unique contribution of every child within the school community.
St Mary's is inclusive and welcomes girls from all communities and faith backgrounds, or none, and believes that all benefit from the school's values.

St Mary's aims to encourage an active partnership between home, school, parish and the wider community.

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1 Key contact details:

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2 Aims

The School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are:

- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
- to prioritise, and where possible improve, attendance and punctuality across the School, to reduce absence in order to prevent children becoming children missing education (CME) and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
- to recognise the linkages between attendance/ absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

3 Scope and application

This policy applies to the whole School including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

4 Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2025);
- Education and Skills Act 2011;
- Children Act 1989, updated 2006;
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010; and

- Data Protection Act May 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (together referred to as data protection laws');

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance (DfE, August 2024, updated June 2026);
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, August 2024);
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, August 2024);
- Communicating with parents about school attendance (DfE, June 2026);
- Guidance for Parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, July 2024);
- 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024);
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2026);
- Children missing education (DfE, September 2025);
- Summary table of responsibilities for children missing education (DfE, September 2025)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017);
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024);
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018);
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023);
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023);
- Providing remote education: guidance for schools (DfE, updated August 2024);
- SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015).

The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Missing Child Policy;
- SEND policy;
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy, including the school rules; and
- Terms and Conditions (Parent Contract).

5 Publication and availability

This policy is available on the School's website.

This policy will be sent to parents when pupils join the School and parents will be reminded of it at the beginning of the school year and when the policy is updated.

This policy is available in hard copy on request. A version with larger text can also be provided on request.

A copy of the policy is available for inspection at any time on the School's website or on request at the School Office during the school day.

6 Definitions and interpretation

Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

- references to attendance include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day;
- references to a Parent means:
 - (a) all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
 - (b) any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and
 - (c) any person who has day to day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil);
- references to a pupil includes anyone who is receiving an education at the School except a person for whom part-time education suitable for people over compulsory school age is being provided;
- references to children missing education (CME) mean children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a School and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at School;
- SAC means the School's Attendance Champion.

7 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

The Governors have overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

The Governors recognise that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have appointed a designated senior leader to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in School, referred to in this policy as the SAC.

To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Governors have allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Analysing attendance and absence data	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	SAC	As required, and at least annually
Formal annual review	The Governors through the Education & Staffing Committee	Annually

8 The importance of good attendance

The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance, it recognises:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the School's vision, values, ethos, and day-to-day life;
- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;
- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
- that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

9 School responsibilities

The School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the School community.

The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.

The school will:

- communicate attendance expectations clearly at the start of each academic year;
- provide information and resources to support attendance, including guidance on illness-related absence;
- contact parents promptly where attendance concerns arise;
- seek to understand and address barriers to attendance before concerns become entrenched; and
- keep attendance information under regular review and share concerns with parents where appropriate.

The School will communicate with parents and carers about attendance in a supportive, respectful and non-judgmental manner. The School recognises that effective attendance is most likely to be achieved where the School and families work in partnership to identify and address barriers to attendance at an early stage. Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

The School will respond to non-attendance and/ or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the

School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

The School will seek to ensure that attendance communications:

- are timely, clear and accessible;
- explain why attendance matters for educational progress, wellbeing and safeguarding;
- encourage constructive dialogue with families;
- take account of individual circumstances and any known barriers to attendance; and
- focus on identifying support and solutions wherever possible.

The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance, those at risk of becoming CME, and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

10 Staff responsibilities

The SAC

The Governors have appointed a senior member of staff from the School's leadership team as SAC to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in School. Details of the individual appointed are at the front of this policy and are known within School.

The SAC's responsibilities are:

- (a) to set a clear vision for improving attendance in School;
- (b) to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- (c) to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the School's strategies and processes;
- (d) to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- (e) to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance

The staff identified in Appendix 1 of this policy have day-to-day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

- have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
- record all absences promptly and accurately using the processes specified;
- seek explanations of absences required from pupils on their return to School;
- make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School;
- look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns;
- deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
- consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the School's behaviour and discipline policies; and
- discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.

All staff

The School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it.

The School provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

11 School arrangements

The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers must be kept electronically. Contact

details of relevant staff can be found at the front of the policy and other details about the School's arrangements can be found in Appendices 1-6.

12 Monitoring attendance

The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

- monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the SENDCO and Designated Safeguarding Lead);
- undertaking frequent individual level analysis to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeting actions for those cases;
- conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and
- providing data and reports to the Governors to support their work as appropriate.

Attendance interventions and thresholds

The School will take proactive action if there are concerns regarding any aspect of attendance mentioned above, in line with the government guidelines. For pupils from Reception to Year 6, the School will write to parents/carers or invite them to a meeting if any of the following thresholds are met:

- **Attendance Below 90%:** The child's overall attendance falls below 90%.
- **Persistent Lateness (Before Register Closes):** The child is regularly late, arriving before the official registration period closes.
- **Lateness After Register Closes:** The child arrives late on more than two occasions after the registration period has closed (defined as 30 minutes after the designated registration time).
- **Patterns of Concern:** The School identifies a specific pattern of absence or has concerns that attendance and punctuality are not being prioritised.
- **Extended Sickness Absence:** The child accumulates 15 or more days of absence due to illness, either consecutively or cumulatively. Please note that the School has a legal obligation to report this to the Local Authority (Borough).

The School understands that exceptional or extenuating circumstances may occasionally arise. However, these are considered rare, and the School is legally bound to comply with statutory government expectations and attendance regulations.

13 Pupil responsibilities

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to manage poor attendance.

Pupils should be aware that:

- they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day;
- they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with school rules;
- they should engage with the School's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;
- any unexplained absence will be followed up;
- persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School. This may take the form of:
 - (a) offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
 - (b) communication with parents;
 - (c) reporting to other agencies such as children's social care;
 - (d) sanctions against them or their parents in line with the School's behaviour policies; and
- if pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending School or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the School encourages them to speak to their form/class teacher, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or those staff identified in Appendix 1 in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

14 Additional needs

The School recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The School will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.

It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, e.g., ensuring the provision outlined in a pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.

Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan, the School will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if:

- a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code 'I' (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness; or
- the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

15 Parent / carer responsibilities

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

This means pupils must attend every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the School.

The School will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short- and long-term consequences of poor attendance.

The School is committed to working collaboratively with parents where attendance concerns arise. Parents are encouraged to discuss any barriers to attendance with the School at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support can be considered.

Expectations the School places on parents can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy.

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the Terms and Conditions (Parent Contract) and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.

16 Training

The School ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and
- the School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This should include:

- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;
- the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;
- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and
- any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

The School maintains written records of all staff training.

17 Information sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

The School, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g., health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms). Where enquiries following the absence of a pupil lead the School to reasonably believe that the child will not return, and no alternative provision has been confirmed by the parent, the School will make a referral to the child's home local authority CME team without delay.

Where appropriate, schools will attend regular targeting support meetings. School is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- New pupil and deletion returns;
- Attendance returns; and
- Sickness returns.

The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the School's registers.

The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State. The School meets this requirement by having an electronic management information system (iSAMS) containing the required information that can be accessed by the DfE on request. The School also uses this tool to monitor pupil level attendance and understand trends in attendance patterns.

Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

18 Record keeping and confidentiality

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

Appendix 1 – School arrangements

1 Managing attendance

The School monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils, promote attendance and prevent children becoming CME. It accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law and set out in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 respectively. The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by the School for the relevant time period as stated by law.

The School expects all pupils to be present at School for the whole of the school day usually from registration at 8:45am to close at year-group based staggered times between 3:30pm and 4pm (see Appendix 5 - Timing of school day) but this period may be extended for example, for out of school clubs, sports fixtures or school trips. Pupils in the Pre-Nursery and Nursery (and with specific agreement, other pupils below statutory school age) are not expected to be present for the whole day, although they are usually expected to be present for at least the morning session. Arrangements are in place for parents of pupils in Pre-Nursery and Nursery to advise on a weekly basis of the sessions (morning; morning and lunch; or morning, lunch and afternoon) their child will be attending.

2 The role of parents / carers

The School expects all parents to:

- make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity;
- notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this;
- notify the School in writing if their child will no longer attend the School after a certain day and supply information to the School about how their child will be continuing to receive suitable education, and
- cooperate with the School to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.

Parents should ensure their child attends School by 8:45am for morning registration.

3 Registration and attendance checks

Mornings

1. Lessons start at 8:45am. The playground is open from 8:00am. Children are brought to their classrooms by school staff from 8:30am.
2. Staff are on duty at the front gate to welcome the children. They are then able to walk through the Reception area to the playground, where there are staff on duty to meet them and supervise. EYFS staff meet children outside and walk them to their classroom. When it is wet, the Mary Ward Hall entrance will be opened, and pupils will be supervised to wait (without their parent) in the Mary Ward Hall (or the Chapel Hall if the Mary Ward Hall is unavailable) until they are collected by their class teacher.
3. When they first enter the School in the mornings, children in Years 1-6 use their wristband and the EntrySign readers located in the Reception area; main corridor to the playground; and by the Mary Ward Hall entrance to log their presence on site. This ensures a fire list is available. EYFS

staff use age-appropriate procedures for the child to log themselves as present in School (such as moving their name to an “in school” list) as the child arrives in their classroom.

4. The school doors are closed at 8:45am.
5. After 8:45am, any child arriving must come into School via the Reception and be reported late by the adult bringing them.
6. The School Office is responsible for ensuring that a record of their arrival is maintained within EntrySign and for recording them as late in the register (including their arrival time and reason for lateness). Parents are required to explain why they have arrived late, and this explanation is recorded.
7. Registers are taken every morning by class teachers at 8:45am using the official registers on the School’s Information Management System (iSAMS) and the legal attendance and absence codes.
8. On the first day of a child’s absence, parents contact the School Office (telephone or email) by 9:00am to explain why their child is absent. A voicemail box dedicated to absences is available for this purpose (option 1 on dialling the school number). Parents may also email their class teacher but must ensure that the School absence email (Absences@stmh.co.uk) is copied in. A specific reason must be given, including where ill, the nature of the illness.
9. The class teacher is responsible for recording the child’s presence at School in the register. The School Nurse (supported by the School Administrator) is responsible for the checking the correct entry of data into the School’s registers regarding all pupil absences and following up on any unexplained absences.
10. Pupils arriving between 8:45am and 9:15am are recorded as late (before registers close - L) but counted as present for that session.
11. The registers close at 9:15am (30 minutes after the start of morning registration) after which a late arrival without a satisfactory explanation (e.g. because of an unavoidable cause) is recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reason given/not given is recorded.

Afternoons

1. In the afternoons, the registers are taken by the class teacher/specialist taking the class at 12:45pm using the official registers on the School’s Information Management System (iSAMS) and the legal attendance and absence codes. This is at the start of the afternoon session for Pre-Nursery – Year 3 and before lunchtime for Year 4 – Year 6. Afternoon registers close 30 minutes later at 1:15pm.
2. Pupils arriving late but less than 30 minutes after the start of the child’s afternoon session are recorded as late but counted as present for that session (“late before registers close” - L). Pupils arriving late when their class is on off-site PE will not be able to join their class but will be given an appropriate activity to undertake within School.
3. After the afternoon register has closed for that class, late arrival without a satisfactory explanation (e.g. because of an unavoidable cause) is recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reason given/not given is recorded.

4 Reporting absence

If a pupil is to be absent, their parent should contact the School Office (telephone or email) by 9:00am on the first day of their child’s absence to explain why their child is absent.

A voicemail box dedicated to absences is available for this purpose (option 1 on dialling the school number).

Parents may also email their class teacher but must ensure that the school absence email (Absences@stmh.co.uk) is copied in.

A specific reason for the absence must be given, including where ill, the nature of the illness. Where illness is cited as a reason for absence, the School may refer parents to current NHS guidance on whether a child is well enough to attend school.

For reasons of safeguarding (Child Protection), these procedures also apply to Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception children below statutory school age so that we can account for the whereabouts of any children not present in School.

5 Arrangements for reporting subsequent absence

After the first day of absence, the fully informed about the child's whereabouts and wellbeing.

For reasons of safeguarding (Child Protection), the School operates a daily policy: parents are expected to contact the School daily to update the School on their child's absence and the School will telephone parents if they have not contacted the School by 9:00am on each day of their absence.

Where absence is expected to last more than one day (for example, chickenpox), the parent may advise the School of this at the time of recording a pupil's absence and a note will be made in the register of the expected return date. Even where parents have advised that a pupil will be away for a number of days due to sickness, the School expects to receive regular updates on the child's welfare and after a few days authorised sickness absence (normally two to three days), if the School has not been contacted by the parents the School Office will call families of children absent due to sickness to enquire after the child's welfare.

6 Managing absence

All absences must be reported to the School as detailed above.

The School Nurse (supported by the School Administrator) is responsible for the checking the correct entry of data into the School's registers regarding all pupil absences and following up on any unexplained absences.

Where the reason for absence has not been reported to the School by the parent by 9:00am, the School will telephone the parents.

If the School Office cannot get hold of either parent of an absent child, the School Office will call all emergency contacts available to ascertain the child's whereabouts.

If it is not possible to ascertain the whereabouts of a missing pupil, an email will be sent on the same day to the child's parent(s) requesting contact be made with the School Office as soon as possible to explain the child's absence.

The School Office will bring to the SAC's immediate attention (or the Headmistress in his/her absence) any unexplained pupil absence or any absence explanation that is felt to require further investigation.

Where necessary, the SAC (or Headmistress in his/her absence) makes investigatory telephone calls to follow up an unexplained or suspicious absence. The School will begin implementing the School's safeguarding and/or missing child procedures.

If neither parent has contacted the School for five days, but it is understood from other sources (e.g., extended family; friends etc.) that the children are safe but absent from School without authorisation, the School will make an immediate referral to the Education Welfare Service for investigation.

Where there are concerns as to the safety or welfare of the child, the School will endeavour to contact parents via an immediate home visit. This may be done in conjunction with Camden Education Welfare Service, Children's Social Care, Health Services or the Police where appropriate.

Even where parents have advised that a pupil will be away for a number of days due to sickness, after a few days authorised sickness absence (normally two to three days), the School Office calls families of children absent due to sickness to enquire after the child's welfare. This may be followed up with a telephone call from the Headmistress or SAC to discuss when the child can return to School.

7 Authorised and unauthorised absences

The School is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

Authorised absence means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Any other absence is unauthorised absence.

A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.

Only if the School is satisfied, in accordance with this policy, as to the validity of the explanation offered, can the absence be authorised.

The Headmistress (or Deputy Head in her absence) makes the decision as to whether an absence should be authorised or unauthorised. The School has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attendance their absence is unauthorised.

Where necessary, it is the parents' responsibility to provide all evidence of absence and bear any costs that this may incur.

8 School procedure for requests for authorised absence

Apart from illness or where there are additional needs, no pupil should be away from School without prior permission from the Headmistress.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headmistress to determine the length of the time the pupil is or was permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence. See section 3 of Appendix 3 for more details.

A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which Parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

All requests for school absence are dealt with in accordance with this policy.

All requests for school absence must be sent by email to the School Nurse using the Absences@stmh.co.uk email address.

Where a request is straight-forward and in accordance with this policy, the Headmistress has delegated to the School Nurse the responsibility of deciding and communicating authorisation (via email) of the request to the parents, with the class teacher copied in. For example, in the cases of absence to attend a medical appointment; single day / part of day requests to attend an external examination, etc.

Other requests will be forwarded by the School Nurse to the Headmistress, who will make the decision and either authorise the School Nurse to communicate the authorisation (or lack thereof) to the parents or will do herself directly or via her PA.

No absence should be considered authorised until the parents have received an email explicitly confirming its authorisation.

Examples of when absence may be unauthorised

1. No explanation of a child's absence is forthcoming within five working days.
2. The School is dissatisfied with the explanation (for example, all the children from one family are off sick for one day or reported sick the day after a holiday etc.).
3. The parent has been advised that absences will not be authorised without appropriate medical confirmation, and no medical confirmation is given.
4. The pupil is absent from School for the purpose of an unauthorised holiday.
5. The pupil is absent from School due to not returning to School from an authorised holiday at the given date.
6. The pupil, on returning to School, explains an alternative reason for the absence (this will be discussed further with the child's parents).

Adverse weather conditions

The School makes every effort to stay open during adverse weather conditions, taking into account all necessary Health and Safety aspects (for example condition of the site, staff: pupil ratios etc.).

Regarding instances of School staying open in severe weather conditions e.g., snow, parents are expected to make every effort to bring their children to School especially when other parents living in the same locations are successfully bringing their children to School.

During periods of heavy snow, the registers remain open until later to allow for longer journey times.

It is understood that some families living further away from School may have more challenging journeys.

Parents are expected to telephone the School Office to discuss this situation in these circumstances. School may close earlier on heavy snow days to facilitate an easier journey home for the children.

Medical and dental appointments

Parents are asked to arrange routine dental and optician check-ups for their children in the school holidays/out of school hours as well as non-emergency GP appointments out of school hours where possible.

Where a pupil is required to be absent from School for a medical appointment, parents are required to request authorisation by emailing the School Absences email and the class teacher to explain the appointment and reason for the absence.

Parents are asked to minimise time their children miss School for medical appointments by requesting only the time required for the appointment (and travel) with no extra time for convenience.

Where required in school time, we ask parents to endeavour to arrange medical / dental etc. appointments such that children are in School for register times: 8.45am and 12:45pm (Pre-Nursery – Year 3); and 1:45pm (Year 4 – Year 6; earlier when off-site PE occurs in the afternoon) and, where well enough, to attend School before and / or after the appointment.

Children are expected to be absent from School only for the time necessary to attend an appointment and not any extra time for convenience. This may, for example, involve bringing a child in for registration and returning later in the morning to collect them for an appointment.

Therapy / specialist education appointments

Parents must request permission for their child to attend therapy /specialist education appointments in the same way as for any other absence.

The SENDCO may be involved in deciding whether this appointment should be authorised.

Pupils out of School but attending therapy / specialist education appointments are recorded in the register as attending education off-site.

Parent procedures

All communication to the School Office regarding pupil attendance and absence has to be made via email (absences@stmh.co.uk) or phone call or by hard copy letters.

All requests for school absence (unless medical) must, wherever possible, be made at least two school weeks in advance of the proposed absence.

Emails sent at the weekend, at night or in the school holidays are noted as received the first following school morning.

Parents must ensure that children arriving late are signed in at the School Office and children leaving early are signed out at the School Office. This is for reasons of Health & Safety so that in the event of an emergency, we know who is in the building.

9 Monitoring attendance and punctuality

Weekly monitoring and follow-Up

The School Nurse meets weekly with the SAC regarding all matters of pupil attendance.

The School Nurse monitors and reports weekly to the SAC, whole school and individual class attendance and any concerns regarding punctuality.

The School Nurse reports each week to the SAC any pupils with less than 90% cumulative attendance (from the start of the academic year).

Half-termly monitoring and follow-up

The SAC reviews the register entries every half-term. The SAC/Headmistress will send a letter to the parents of those:

- who have missed School (cumulative attendance of less than 90% cumulative attendance (from the start of the academic year)); or
- who have been persistently late (10 or more L codes (late before registers) or more than one U code (late after registers) since the start of the academic year);

and remind them of the expectations.

A letter will not be sent to the parents of the same child at the end of subsequent half-terms in the same academic year, if there has been no further School missed nor additional late codes added since the last letter sent.

Monitoring and follow-up from time to time

Parents of pupils with attendance and / or punctuality concerns that are not improving will be asked to meet with the SAC (at Parents' Evenings or on other occasions) to discuss ways of improving their child's attendance. These meetings are recorded in the attendance file and may be followed up with a letter to parents.

Regarding Reception children not yet of statutory school age (reached the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday), we have the same expectations regarding attendance and punctuality as we do of statutory school aged children. Where there are persistent attendance and / or punctuality concerns, the SAC will meet with the child's parents to explain the negative impact on their child's learning and the importance of establishing good attendance and punctuality habits.

Pupil attendance will be prioritised and reported at all meetings with parents, pupil progress meetings, IEP review meetings and Parents' Evening meetings etc. if staff are concerned.

10 Reporting duties

The School is legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

New pupil and deletion returns: notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.

Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U).

Sickness returns: providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the School has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

Action will also be taken in accordance with the Missing Child Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare. This includes referring any concerns about a pupil to local children's social care services and instigating a police welfare check where necessary.

Action will also be taken in accordance with the missing child policy and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Appendix 2 – National codes

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil whose name is listed in the admission register at the time.

2 Attending the school

Code	Definition
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session / afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed

3 Attending a place other than school

Code	Definition
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity

4 Absent - leave of absence

Code	Definition
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

5 Absent - other authorised reasons

Code	Definition
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded

6 Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code	Definition
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 (e.g. due to adverse weather)
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

7 Absent - unauthorised absence

Code	Definition
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G	Holiday not granted by the school
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N	Reason for absence not yet established
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O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
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U	Arrived in school after registration closed
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8 Administrative codes

Code	Definition
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Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
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#	Planned whole school closure
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Camden has instructed the School to use B for open days and interviews.

Appendix 3 – Admission register

In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the School will:

- maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and
- inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.

The admission register must be kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The School must ensure that every entry in the School's admission register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding Parents and carers and details of the school they last attended.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.

Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the School must provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the address of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
- the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Appendix 4 – Attendance register

Attendance register

The School records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024.

The School uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system (in agreement with Camden authority) to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations.

The attendance register is kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

School register is a legal document, which may be required to be submitted as evidence in legal proceedings and is kept in School for six years from the date of the entries.

The School will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched and in order to prevent children becoming CME.

The School is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

- physically present in School when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
- absent from the School when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
- attending a place other than the School; or
- absent.

The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the School, can include:

- attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;
- for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the School and supervised by a member of School staff;
- attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
- attending an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the School as part of the pupil's education;
- attending a place for any other approved educational activity.

Recording absence

Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes (in agreement with Camden Authority) set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

- leaves of absence;
- other authorised reasons;
- unable to attend School because of unavoidable cause;
- unauthorised absence.

Remote education

The School is required to record all absence from in-person lessons.

The School may, in extremely limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the School site, to keep pace with their education.

In the rare circumstances when the School decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following will be considered:

- ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by the School, parents or carers, potentially pupils, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional. If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision;
- if remote education is being used as part of a plan to reintegrate back to School, putting a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to School at the earliest opportunity;
- setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs.

Pupils who are absent from School and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. The School will keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register. Where appropriate, this information may be used to make plans for a pupil's reintegration to School.

The School will utilise a digital education platform that will be kept up-to-date and keep pupils safe. Staff will remain trained and confident in its use.

Unauthorised absence

The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance or where no explanation has been given meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include:

- holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Headmistress staff authorised to grant permission;
- the reason for absence has not been provided;
- a pupil is absent from School without authorisation;
- a pupil has arrived in School after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

Appendix 5 – Timings of the school day

To ease congestion, there is a staggered dismissal from the front of the School at the following times:

Class	End Time
Year 6	4:00
Year 5	3:55
Year 4	3:50
Year 3	3:45
Year 2	3:40
Year 1	3:35
R	3:30
N	11:45/12:30/3:30
PN	11:45/12:30/3:30

Appendix 6 – Template letters

Example templates of letters that will be sent if the attendance of your daughter falls below 90% or she is persistently late.

Lateness email template 1:

Dear **[Parent's Name]**,

In line with the new Government guidance and expectations. I would like to politely remind you of the importance of ensuring that your daughter arrives at school on time. Punctuality plays a crucial role in maximising learning opportunities and helping students start their day on the right foot.

Each minute of class time is valuable and arriving late not only disrupts the flow of the lesson but also leads to missed educational time. Students who arrive late miss the start of the day when teachers explain what is happening and make their way to the first activity; this can be disorientating for children if instructions are missed. Our records show your daughter has been late on **[X]** occasions since the start of this academic year which could negatively impact her overall learning progress.

We kindly ask that you make every effort to ensure that your child arrives at school promptly so she can fully benefit from the day's lessons and activities.

Thank you for your understanding and support in ensuring that our students get the most out of their education. If there is anything we can do to support you or you would like to discuss this further, please let us know.

Lateness email template 2:

Dear **[Parent's Name]**,

I hope this message finds you well.

In line with the latest government guidance and expectations, I wanted to take a moment to gently remind you of the importance of punctuality and ensuring that **[Child's Name]** arrives at school on time each day. Punctuality plays a key role in setting a positive tone for the day, maximising learning opportunities, and helping students feel settled and ready to engage.

Every minute of class time is valuable. When students arrive late, they miss the crucial start of the day, where teachers outline the day's activities and prepare them for learning. This can be disorienting and may impact their overall progress. Our records indicate that **[Child's Name]** has been late on **[X]** occasions since the start of this academic year, and we want to work together to ensure she gets the most out of her education.

We kindly ask for your support in making every effort to ensure **[Child's Name]** arrives at school promptly so she can fully benefit from the day's lessons and activities. If there are any challenges we can support you with or if you'd like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for your time and support. We truly appreciate your partnership in helping **[Child's Name]** thrive.

Attendance below 90% email template 1:

Dear **[Parent's Name]**,

I am writing to remind you of the importance of regular attendance for your daughter, in line with the new Government expectations. Consistent attendance is essential for ensuring that she is able to make the most of her education and maintain her learning progress.

Each day of school provides valuable lessons, activities, and interactions that are crucial to her academic and personal development. According to our records, your daughter has missed **[Insert days or percentage of time missed]**. As per the new guidance, we want to emphasise that missed school days can impact her ability to stay on track with the curriculum.

We understand that absences may sometimes be unavoidable, and we are here to support your family. However, we kindly ask that you make every effort to ensure your daughter attends school regularly, as this greatly benefits her education and aligns with the Government's expectations for attendance.

If there is anything we can do to support you or if you'd like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support in helping your daughter benefit from her educational opportunities.