

# **Collaton St. Mary C of E (VA) Primary School**

## **Policy for Attendance and Truancy**

**Dated: November 2005**

**Review annually:**

**1. \_\_\_\_\_**

**2. \_\_\_\_\_**

**3. \_\_\_\_\_**

## **POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY**

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Collaton St. Mary expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. However, children should not attend school if they are unwell.

### **Aims**

- ◆ To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents and pupils.
- ◆ To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.
- ◆ To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.
- ◆ To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- ◆ To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- ◆ To implement a system for rewards and sanctions.
- ◆ To promote effective partnership with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
- ◆ To use the Education Welfare Service to the best effect.

### **Communication**

Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out in the School Prospectus. This emphasises the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if a child is absent for any reason.

The importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained at the Pre-school Induction Meetings. This reiterates that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children, particularly, should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school. Parents need to be aware that even little things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various Year Groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head Teacher. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines.

At this Induction Meeting, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time. At Collaton, we prefer that family holidays should be taken during school holidays, so that a child's education is not disrupted. Parents are reminded in Newsletters that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits. The Head Teacher contacts those parents who frequently take the family holiday in term-time and reminds them of the disruption to their child's education.

At Collaton St. Mary, parents are asked to complete a Request for Leave of Absence form, if they wish to take their child out of school for an appointment, visit or holiday. The Head Teacher approves absence from school. If the request is for a holiday, the Head Teacher will consider the impact on the child's education, previous absences from school and the proximity to SATs, exams, etc. If the Head Teacher does not sanction the absence, any absence by the pupil will be treated as unauthorised.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents should contact school if their child will be absent or late. A telephone call is acceptable; a book is kept in the office to record telephone messages under the headings: Date, Child, Class, and Reason for Absence. When their child returns, parents should send a letter to school explaining the absence. Parents may call at the school to see the class teacher to notify their child's non-attendance. (The class teacher keeps these records in the register folder.) All information is used for Class Registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence, the school administrator contacts the parent/guardian.

On the child's return to school, parents should complete an Absence Return form, which is seen by the Head Teacher, before inclusion with the child's records.

### **Registration**

Collaton St. Mary uses a computerised registration system and the Register is completed in the morning and afternoon at 9.00am and 1.30pm. A pupil will receive a late mark in registration between 9.05 and 9.15. All pupils who are late must report to the office.

Mrs Lynne Sargeant is responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notifies the Head Teacher if there is any reason for concern. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents with their child's School Report.

The Governors' Report to Parents records the school attendance figures for authorised and unauthorised absence. These figures can also be found in the Ofsted Report and the School Prospectus.

### **Concerns**

The Attendance Book (kept in the office) is examined regularly. If there is a frequent pattern of absence from school, a member of the school staff will telephone the parents to ascertain the reason for persistent absence. If there are concerns about a child's non-attendance or unpunctuality, the class teacher consults the Head Teacher immediately. Details of attendance or late percentage are extracted from the computer database. A letter outlining absences without reason is sent to the parents. If this persists, the Head Teacher shows this to the parent(s) during an informal discussion. If absences or unpunctuality persist, the Head Teacher will arrange for contact to be made with the Education Welfare Officer. If the situation needs discussing before a home visit, the Head Teacher should telephone and print off a hard copy of attendance patterns for the EWO's information and use.

The Educational Welfare Officer meets the Head Teacher and/or the Admin Officer each term as well as and when required, to discuss attendance issues offering action, advice and support.

### **Absence Through Illness**

Collaton St. Mary continues to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows to keep up the momentum of their learning.

It monitors attendance of those pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness, and close links are maintained with parents.

Educational support, including the provision of work and materials is provided for those pupils who are absent from school, with medical conditions for more than 10 days. ICT is used if practicable, including the use of CD-Roms, e-mail and the school website to access information. The teaching staff liaise with Medical Advisers and/or Home Tuition Providers, so that during prolonged absence pupils receive suitable work for their age and ability group.

The reintegration of children into school after a long absence through ill health is considered a high priority. The school consults parents about general concerns, medical issues and the timing and pace of return. Staff, including the class teacher, Teaching Assistants and Home or Hospital Tutor meet to discuss the return to school. Friends and other pupils are encouraged to help the child settle back in school. Extra support is provided (subject to available resources) after an analysis of the child's needs.

### **Truancy**

All staff at Collaton St. Mary believe in the importance of continuity in every child's learning. Staff are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although truancy is very rare at Collaton, if staff are suspicious that a child might be playing truant, action is taken immediately.

If truancy is suspected, the Head Teacher and the Educational Welfare Officer are notified. Parents are contacted, either by telephone or a home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and, we hope, resolved. If the Head Teacher is unable to talk to the parent(s), he or she talks to the child to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If problems are identified, these are discussed and resolved with the class teacher, member of staff or other pupils as required.

At Collaton, we endeavour to discover, through discussion with the individual pupils, classes and the School Council, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's opinions and, if possible, adjustments are made to teaching and learning procedures and the school environment.

### **Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

#### **Assemblies and gatherings**

The Education Welfare Officer will talk to the children as required in an appropriate setting. Individual Assemblies on everyday matters relate to attendance, such as, time-keeping, excuses, illness, what Collaton can and cannot change.

### **Class Organisation/Lessons**

- ◆ Worksheets on attendance; time-keeping monitoring sheets.
- ◆ Lessons on telling the time.
- ◆ Word searches; attendance quiz.
- ◆ Children design posters for attendance and punctuality to be displayed around the school.
- ◆ Writing letters.
- ◆ Class/Children's Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school.
- ◆ Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent.
- ◆ Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration.

### **Rewards**

- ◆ Certificates are presented to those children with the best attendance during the year and those with significantly improved attendance.

### **Additional Policy for Schools with High Levels of Absence**

Pupils who have not arrived by 10am, and for whom no message of explanation has been received, are followed up immediately. The parents are telephoned at home/work/mobile phone until someone responds. If no telephone contact is established, a home visit may be made by the EWO.

## Further Information

### Useful Documents and Resources

DfES	Consultation on the Education of Sick Children 2001
DfES	LEA Behaviour Support Plans (Circular 1/98)
DfES/Home Office	Social Inclusion: Pupil Support (Circular 10/99)
DfES	Tackling Truancy Together