



**ST. MARY'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**
Dellsome Lane, Welham Green, Herts. AL9 7NE



“Flourish for the future”

Headteacher: Mr A D Petty

Tel: 01707 276725

Email: admin@stmarys565.herts.sch.uk

22nd January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a school, our aim is for attendance to be 100% and for no child to fall into the category of persistent absence. As a school our attendance currently stands at the following:

- **Overall attendance is 90.3% (The National Average is 95% with a target of 96%)**
- **Persistent absence at 36.4%. (The National Average is 15%)**
- **St Mary's is in the bottom 10% Nationally for attendance**

This is a real cause for concern. Improving and then maintaining high levels of attendance is a top priority for St Mary's Primary School.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for securing strong academic progress, maintaining wellbeing, and accessing the full curriculum. Students who do not attend school consistently are placed at a clear disadvantage compared with their peers. National research from the Department for Education shows that students with attendance below 94% are at risk of achieving up to two grades lower in public examinations than their potential.

Attendance is a significant focus for Ofsted inspections. The inspection handbook states:

“Where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, inspectors will expect attendance to be a high priority for leaders and to be improving towards and beyond national levels. There should be a strong understanding of the causes of absence, particularly for pupils who are persistently absent (below 90%) or severely absent, and a clear strategy in place to improve attendance for all pupils.”

With effect from today, If your child's attendance falls below 90%:

- You will be required to attend a formal Attendance Meeting with senior staff.
- An Attendance Action Plan will be implemented, with clear targets and review dates.
- The case may be referred discussed with the Local Authority Attendance Team.
- We may issue a Notice to Improve which formally gives you 6 weeks to improve your child's attendance or pursue further legal action where necessary.
- A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued if your child's attendance does not improve following the issue of a Notice to Improve or if you take a term-time holiday of more than 5 days:
- The first Fixed Penalty Notice is issued at £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- If payment is not received within 21 days, the fine increases to £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days.
- Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may result in the case being referred to the Local Authority for prosecution.

We fully recognise that some absences are unavoidable. Children may occasionally be too unwell to attend school, may have medical appointments that must take place during the school day, or

there may be exceptional circumstances such as a bereavement or significant family event. These absences may be authorised if deemed exceptional. We do require proof of scheduled medical appointments.

Parents and carers do not have an automatic right to take children out of school during term time. A request can only be made by a parent or carer who has Parental Responsibility and with whom the child normally lives. Any holiday during term time must be requested in advance by completing the Request for Term Time Leave Form, available on our school website or from the school office.

Please take the time to read our Attendance Policy on our website, which sets out how we work alongside parents and carers and the support we can provide you and your child.

If you have any questions, our Office Team will be happy to help. Maximising each child's attendance is one of the most effective ways we can give pupils the best possible chance of success in their learning. We greatly value our partnership with families and look forward to working together to ensure that every pupil can thrive.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Egerton
Deputy Headteacher