



St. Mark's C.E. Primary School

Talbot Village, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH10 4JA

Headteacher: Andrew Bright

Friday 18 September 2026

ATTENDANCE – STARTING THE YEAR STRONG

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are now into **Week 3 of the new school year**, and it is a good time to reinforce positive routines and attendance habits for the year ahead.

We hope your children have enjoyed settling back into school, seeing their friends, getting back to their favourite lessons and enjoying the familiar routines and activities that school brings.

Making attendance a positive habit

We know that getting back into routines after the long summer break can take time. Children may be tired, reluctant to come to school or finding the adjustment challenging. At times, it can feel easier to keep a child at home when they are saying they don't want to come in.

However, establishing regular attendance now helps children develop positive habits that can continue throughout the year and into later life. **Every school day matters**, and being in school regularly supports learning, friendships, confidence and a sense of belonging.

National attendance data highlights the importance of establishing good attendance from the very beginning of the school year. Of pupils who had at least one day of absence during the first week of the 2024/25 academic year, **57.4% went on to become persistently absent**.

Supporting good routines

Simple routines can make a big difference:

- Encourage a consistent bedtime and wake-up time.
- Limit screens for at least an hour before bedtime and during the morning, which can really hinder children being ready and prepared to leave the house.
- Make sure children have breakfast and are ready for the day.
- Keep mornings calm and predictable.
- Encourage your child to take some simple responsibility for being ready for each school day.
- Talk positively about school and the things your child enjoys.
- If your child is reluctant to attend, encourage them to talk about what is worrying them and speak to us if you need support.

Attendance expectations

Please remember that our school attendance policy sets out our expectations for regular attendance and how absences are managed.

Our attendance policy can be found [here](#):

We have looked carefully at our **own school attendance data** and have identified a particular focus on pupils whose attendance is between **95 – 90% or below**. We want to address attendance concerns **early**, before attendance falls further. Therefore, one of our key priorities this year will be to **reduce absence and improve attendance for pupils below the 95% range**.

This is not about penalising families. It is about working together, identifying any barriers early and supporting children to develop the positive attendance habits they need for the year ahead.

Let's make this a year of **positive routines, regular attendance and great opportunities for every child**. Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,



Mr Bright
Headteacher

EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR ANXIETY, MENTAL HEALTH AND EBSNA

We recognise that, for some children, difficulties with attendance can be linked to **anxiety, worries about school or emotional and mental health needs**.

The **Dorset Mental Health Support Team (MHST)** provides helpful resources and webinars for parents and carers, including support around **anxiety, mental health and Emotionally Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA)**.

These free webinars can provide practical advice and strategies to help families understand and support children who may be finding school attendance difficult.

Dorset MHST – Supporting Children & Young People's Mental Health

[Dorset MHST webinars and resources](#)

If you need direct help or advice, you can contact **Dorset Connection on 0800 652 0190**.

Kooth / Soluna by Kooth also provides free digital mental health and wellbeing support for young people, including resources, activities and access to trained mental health professionals. The service is designed to be accessible without a GP or school referral, although availability can depend on local commissioning.

[Kooth / Soluna – young people's mental health support](#)

If you need direct help or advice, you can also contact **Dorset Connection on 0800 652 0190**.