

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Due for Review: Every Year
Reviewed by: Head of School
Last Reviewed: Sept 2022
Next Review: Sept 2023

Mission: Living, loving and learning with God

1. PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary's Primary School is committed to providing a successful and enriching educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any circumstances that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and therefore our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. We will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

2. OBJECTIVES

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

3. STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll.

4. PRINCIPLES

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will work with parents/carers to ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community in the development and review of our whole school attendance policy. We will

encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process.

Parents/carers and pupils will be informed of their attendance rates and related issues. We will promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence and will ensure regular evaluation of the Attendance Policy and procedures by the Head of School and the school governors (annually).

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Start and Finishing Times of Registration

Morning Registration: children in at 8.45am

Afternoon Registration: 1.00pm

Any child who arrives after the completion of the register will be recorded as late on the register.

5.2 Guidance on the Accurate Completion of Registers

It is a legal requirement that registers are completed accurately. Absences should be recorded in line with the codes contained within the registers. Registers should be returned to the school office promptly at the end of registration.

5.3 First Day Contact Between Parents and School

Parents/carers should always inform the school of why their child is away by phoning by 9.00 am on the first day of absence. Should parents/carers fail to telephone, the school will contact parents/carers for an explanation of absence. If contact cannot be made a home visit may be initiated. If there are concerns around a families welfare the EWO or Police may be contacted.

5.4 Guidance on Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absences are those absences where the school has been contacted by parents/carers with a valid reason for a child's absence e.g. sickness, hospital appointment or in the exceptional case where a holiday form has been authorised by the Head of School.(ref below).

5.5. Referral Routes for Pupils with Emerging Attendance Problems

Teaching staff should look out for a pattern in children's absence (eg. absence each Wednesday or whenever there is PE) and should discuss their concerns with the Head of School. If there is a concern about a child's attendance this will be dealt with in discussion with the child's parents.carers. The Head of School will meet with the school's admin staff on a regular basis to discuss children whose attendance causes concern.

Should a child's attendance fall below 95% for the current academic year;

1. Parents/carers will receive a letter from the Head of School advising them of their child's attendance rate and offering support to improve their attendance (appendix 1)

2. If attendance continues to be a concern and no improvement is noted or over 10 unauthorised absences are recorded , a second letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them of the need for urgent improvement (appendix 2)
3. If attendance becomes 'persistent absence' (i.e. below 90% or fails to improve), parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with the Head of School to explore ways to improve their child's attendance. They will also be informed of the harm that persistent absence can cause to their child's education and well-being. An 'Attendance Improvement Plan' will be agreed (appendix 4).
4. If, following stage 3 (above), attendance remains below 90%, the Head of School will consider applying to Devon LA for a penalty notice to be issued and inform the EWO.

5.7 Requests for Leave

Parents/carers **do not** have an automatic right to holiday absence and holidays or other leave should not be taken in term time. A copy of our school term dates is readily available to all parents both from the school office and on the website.

Leave from school will not be authorised during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and will not be granted during any SATs period or run up to it.

Leave forms must be completed before the leave is taken and must be authorised by the Head of School to be accepted as an authorised absence.

5.8 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness: (appendices 5 – 7)

The school day starts at 8:45am for all children.

At 9:00 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows they are late and will need to be registered by an adult in the office.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head of School, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

The school day finishes at 3.30pm. We monitor late collection from the school premises at the end of the school day. If there are persistent late pick-ups then the school will invite you to meet with them to discuss this matter. If it becomes frequent and regular or a pattern emerges then letters will be sent home.

6. WORKING TOGETHER.

At St. Mary's we believe that good attendance requires working together. We encourage parents/carers to work with us and inform us of anything that is causing difficulties with attendance. Equally we believe in working with external agencies to support families and

improve attendance. It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Responsibility to promote attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

A copy of our Attendance Policy can be viewed on the school website.

APPENDIX 1

Situations where a pupil's absence falls below 95% for the current academic year

For example:

- A pupil is regularly ill, but doesn't have an identified medical need
- Combined circumstances (such as a family bereavement and pupil illness) means the pupil has missed a lot of lesson time

Absences from school

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

[His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 2

situations where a pupil's absence continues to be a concern or over 10 unauthorised absences for the current academic year

For example:

- A pupil is regularly ill, but doesn't have an identified medical need
- Combined circumstances (such as a family bereavement and pupil illness) means the pupil has missed a lot of lesson time

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Unauthorised absences from school

I'm writing to express my concern at recent unauthorised absences from school.

** has been absent from school for a total of sessions, of which ** are unauthorised sessions. These are on the following dates:

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than ten half day unauthorised absences. You can find more information about penalty notices through the Devon County Council website-

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-attendance/absence-from-school-penalty-notices/>

Please contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can so we can arrange to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 3

If attendance become persistent absence below 95% or fails to improve

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Unauthorised absences from school

I'm writing to express my concern that attendance in school has reached below 90%/failed to improve and [redacted] has been absent from school for a total of [redacted] sessions, of which are [redacted] unauthorised sessions. These are on the following dates:

It is important that a support plan is put into place to help facilitate [redacted]'s improved attendance. A meeting has been arranged for: [redacted] and you will be required to attend. Non-attendance will trigger EWO being contacted to support yourselves/yourself and the school in this matter.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than ten half day unauthorised absences. You can find more information about penalty notices through the Devon County Council website-

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Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 4

Attendance Improvement Plan

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
School:	

Present at meeting:	
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Action agreed

EXAMPLES OF ACTION AGREED:

- Pupil/s will arrive at school by 8.45a.m. everyday.
- If there are any issues preventing pupils from attending regularly, school staff will be informed and support will be given.
- If the pupil/s are unwell the school is to be contacted by 8.45am. Parents or carers need to contact the school for everyday of the absence.
- If the pupil/s are not in school and no contact has been made the school will visit the home.
- Following this visit if the school has concerns about the welfare of the family the EWO or police will be contacted.

Attendance target:	100%
Timescale for improvement:	

Date for review meeting:	
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I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

..... Parent/carers

..... Pupil

..... School Representative

APPENDIX 5

Lateness letter

Dear Parents/Carers,

Late Arrival at School: «Forename» «Surname»

I am writing to inform you that «Forename» has been late xx times this half term, during the period up to and including xx.

I do appreciate that slow traffic and other factors can contribute to children being late for school but please be aware it can be distressing and disruptive for children when they are late. It may also impact on their first lesson.

Therefore can I remind you of the importance of punctual attendance at school and request that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time in the future.

Please note all children should arrive at school by 8:45am

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 6

Persistent Lateness/Failure to Improve

Dear Parents/Carers,

Persistent Late Arrival at School: «Forename» «Surname»

I am writing to inform you that «Forename» has been late xx times to date this academic year, during the period up to and including xx.

I am disappointed to see «Forename»'s punctuality has not improved since I wrote to you last. I do appreciate that slow traffic and other factors can contribute to children being late for school but please be aware it can be distressing and disruptive for children when they are late. It may also impact on their first lesson.

Therefore can I remind you of the importance of punctual attendance at school and request that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time in the future. If no improvement is made you will be invited to meet with the Head of School to discuss ways we can help support you regarding punctuality.

All children should arrive school by 8.45am

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 7

End of day late collection

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to inform you that I am concerned that xx has been collected after 3:30pm on the following occasions this term:

xxxx

xxxx

May I remind you that the school day ends at 3:30pm for pupils, please ensure you have the appropriate arrangements in place as I expect your child to be collected on time from now on.

If this continues we will have to look into charging you for the staff member's time after 3:30pm.

Yours sincerely,