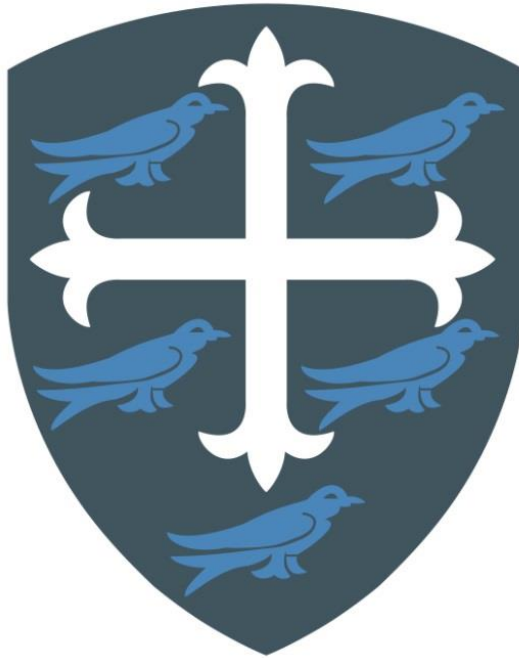


# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

<b>Legal Status:</b>	Non Statutory
<b>Last Review:</b>	November 2022
<b>Review date:</b>	October 2024
<b>Next Review:</b>	October 2026
<b>Responsible Person:</b>	Governing Body

### **Mission Statement**

"The family of St Mary's strives to grow in God's love and care by learning together and valuing the uniqueness of each person."

## **Attendance and Punctuality Expectations**

- We expect children attending St Mary's to aim for 100% school attendance, unless there are medical conditions or other special circumstances which we have been notified about.
- Your child must be in school by 8.50am at the latest; with the exception of Nursery pupils, who must be in school by 9.00am
- Children arriving for the morning session after 8.50am must come through the office so that they can be marked in late. The afternoon register is taken as soon as the children come in from lunch at 1pm
- Leave of Absence during term time will not be authorised for holidays. Parents who choose to ignore this school rule will be referred to the local authority for an Education Penalty Notice (PN) of £60 which must be paid within 21 days, otherwise increases to £120 which also has to be paid within 7 days of the issue date.
- Three days is the maximum authorised leave that may be granted for a bereavement – any extra days taken will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Parents should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. Please arrange these during holiday periods or at the end of the school day. An appointment should not result in a whole day's absence from school unless the circumstances are exceptional.
- In accepting an offer of a place and in sending your child to St Mary's Catholic Primary School, you are agreeing to fully support school policies, procedures and high expectations.

## **Aims of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

- To ensure the school meets their safeguarding responsibilities
- To improve pupil attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school and to communicate this effectively to pupils, staff, parents and governors
- To raise educational achievement of all pupils
- To prepare children for their adult working lives
- To provide support and guidance to parents and pupils
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- To promote and reward regular school attendance at whole school, class and individual level
- To ensure the school takes into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when monitoring and reporting on attendance issues

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The school Governors along with the Headteacher and the Attendance Officer will, at the beginning of each school year, set an attendance target for the school.

The school Governors are also responsible for ensuring that the names of all pupils are recorded on the school admissions and daily register.

The Headteacher has a responsibility to ensure that the daily register of pupils attending the school is taken and has designated the Attendance Officer to monitor and report on attendance. If there is a concern with attendance, parents will be contacted in writing and a meeting will be scheduled.

Parents have a statutory responsibility to ensure their children attend school. Failure to ensure your child attends school regularly will result in a referral to H&F's Early Help Service who have a duty to ensure that parents meet this responsibility. Early Help can seek legal redress to secure a pupil's attendance if a parent fails in their duty.

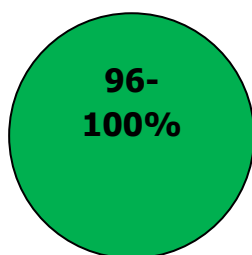
### **Working with the Local Authority**

The DSL liaises with H&F's ACE Team to discuss any concerns.

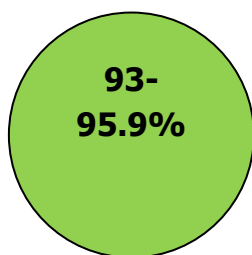
### **How Our School Manages Pupil Absence**

At St Mary's, the attendance of pupils is recorded electronically. This helps the school to produce termly data through the School Census for the Department for Education. It also helps the school provide information on pupil attendance for parents as well as for Ofsted inspectors. Each reason for pupil absence has a special code and this assists the school to monitor persistent absenteeism. In our school we expect pupils to have at least 96% attendance. Parents of pupils attending this school have a responsibility to make sure their children reach or exceed 96% attendance. Through data analysis we can see which pupils fall below this threshold and take appropriate action.

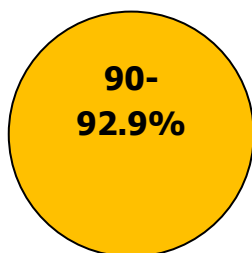
Please see our traffic light system below for monitoring Attendance



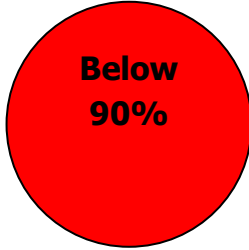
Attendance levels are good to excellent.  
Positive encouragement/incentives/rewards required to maintain high levels of attendance.



Attendance levels beginning to cause concern.  
Analyse data and provide reports to regularly monitor attendance/reasons for absence, patterns etc.  
Letter from school staff warning parents of concern and advise that future absences not to be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.



Attendance levels causing a more significant concern.  
Parents invited to a meeting/attendance panel at school and Attendance Action Plan/contract agreed.  
A date for plan/contract to be reviewed agreed at the meeting (3 to 4 weeks), individual attendance target set.



Attendance decreased to an unacceptable level - below persistent absence rate – despite interventions by school staff.

Refer for outside intervention to Early Help Services.

Parents will be invited to a meeting at school and an Attendance Action Plan/Contract will be agreed.

A date for this plan/contract to be reviewed will be set at the meeting and will most often be 3-4 weeks after the contract has been put in place.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

At St Mary's, we have an expectation that parents contact the school on each day of a school absence, so we can meet our safeguarding responsibilities. If it is known that the absence may be more than a few days (e.g broken limb or chicken pox) we may agree to less frequent updates. Following all absences, parents must send in a written explanation or complete the school 'Reason For Absence' form. We are not obliged to authorise any absences and we may not accept a parent's reason for absence especially if the child's attendance is below 96%. Regular unauthorised absences may mean that a parent or parents could be breaking the law and they will be:

- issued with an Education Penalty Notice OR
- prosecuted in a magistrates court

Because school attendance is a very serious matter, we aim to have good communication about attendance matters with pupils and parents through our newsletters, academic review meetings and school assemblies. If there is a problem it is better if a parent speaks with the Attendance Officer rather than allow a situation to escalate.

#### **a) Regular Pupil Sickness**

If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child's absences. This discussion may include other professionals including the school nurse. When a child is regularly absent due to illness the school may request a parent provide medical details from their GP before continuing to authorise further absences.

#### **c) Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Holidays during school time are not allowed. The school is closed for 14 weeks of the year and parents are expected to use this time for taking holidays and visiting family. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays.

If you have an exceptional circumstance requiring leave during term time, you must complete the 'exceptional leave in term time' form and submit it to the Headteacher, explaining the reason. You may then be invited to a meeting at the school to discuss the matter. The final decision will be made by the Headteacher. Parents should not under any circumstances make travel arrangements during term time without discussing it with the school first, as they risk losing money.

Parents of children taken out of school for unauthorised leave during term time will be issued with an Education Penalty Notice (£60 per child and if not paid within 21 days of issue date this will increase to £120 per child) and may also risk the child losing their school place. Our school has the full support of our Governors and the local authority in this matter with the Headteacher's decision being final and no right of appeal.

#### **d) Bereavement Leave of Absence**

At some point, most of us will be affected by bereavement. Whilst it is understood that bereavement often happens with little warning, we always appreciate a telephone call to let us know why your child is not in school. Three days authorised leave of absence is the most that will be granted for bereavement, with any additional days being recorded as unauthorised term time leave.

#### **Every School Day Counts**

<b>Pupil Attendance Levels</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>190</b> school days in each year – your child has attended every day and had the opportunity to reach their full potential.
	<b>95%</b>	<b>10</b> days absence means over 60 hours of learning opportunities have been missed. This will have an impact on your child's learning.
	<b>90%</b>	<b>19</b> days absence is equivalent to missing a month of school.
	<b>85%</b>	<b>28</b> days absence equates to being absent for a whole half-term. It will now be much harder for your child to make progress in their learning. This is a serious child welfare concern.
	<b>80%</b>	<b>38</b> days absence is a very serious welfare and legal concern. Your child will have large gaps in their learning and may have difficulty maintaining friendships owing to their frequent absence.

#### **Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.50am at the latest. The register is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. If children arrive after 8.50am, which is when the register closes, they must go through the school office so they are recorded as being late.

Children should be collected promptly from school at the end of the day; 3.00pm for Nursery children and 3:15pm for children in Reception to Year 6. If a parent is going to be late collecting their child they should ring the school office. Any parent who regularly collects their child late will be invited to meet with the Headteacher. In very serious cases of children being left late at school the child may be deemed to be abandoned with the local police station being informed, as well as a referral made to Social Care.

#### **Reporting Absence**

Parents must phone the school with a full explanation before 8.50am if their child is going to be absent *and* provide a written reason for absence when the child returns

to school. The school has an answerphone service so you may telephone and leave a detailed message as soon as you know your child will be absent.

#### First day absence:

Expectation on parents is that they must contact the school by 8:50am. If we have not heard from you by 9am, we will attempt to call you. Your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised if we are not able to contact you; until an adequate reason or response is provided.

#### Third day absence:

If the school is unable to contact a parent and a child has not been in school for 3 days; and the school has been unable to contact other family members, they may decide to refer the family to the Local Authority's Early Help Team.

#### Ten or more days of absence:

Without explanation of absence or contact established with the family, the school will refer the family to the Local Authority's Early Help Team.

### **Children on Long Term Leave Due To Illness or Disability**

Occasionally some children have to be away from school over a long period of time due to illness or disability. We will ensure that if they are well enough they can continue their education either in hospital or if possible to send work home for the child to complete. We will work closely with outside agencies to ensure your child continues their education.

### **Dental & Medical Appointments**

Wherever possible, parents should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at end of the school day. An appointment should not result in a whole day's absence from school.

### **School Governors**

The Headteacher has a responsibility to report on attendance issues at every full meeting of the governing body. Our Governors support the Headteacher in managing requests for pupil leave of absence and take the position that families have "no right" to such leave. Our Governors decide the start and finish of the school day and determine the dates for the school term and holiday dates. Our Chair of Governors can be contacted via the school office.

### **Safeguarding Children**

Our school must be able to demonstrate to Ofsted that it knows the whereabouts of each child and the reason for their absence.

It is very important for the local authority to be able to track children if they are not attending school and, in some cases, for schools to make a referral to Social Care. If your family is moving house, please let us know if you will no longer require a place for your child, with the date that they will be leaving. It is also helpful to us to have the name of the new school that your child will be attending. If you do not have this information at the time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number so that we can contact you.

In line with Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006), children who leave the school, and their

whereabouts are unknown, will be referred to the ACE Team. Their details may be entered on the H&F 'Children Missing from Education Database' if the child's whereabouts cannot be located.

When the school has a concern about a child's attendance record, we will instruct a school or local authority official to conduct a home visit, even if a reason has been provided for absence. This is an important safeguarding measure to preserve the well-being and education of children. Such visits may be announced or unannounced.

### **How We Celebrate Excellent & Improving Attendance and Punctuality**

Our weekly school newsletter contains information about the classes with the highest attendance and punctuality record each week. We have weekly class trophies and an end of term award for the class with the highest attendance and punctuality.

## **Appendix A:**

### **Exceptional Leave in Term Time**

Leave in term time may only be granted in **exceptional circumstances** and **permission must be sought in advance** from the headteacher.

Where exceptional leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. Leave of absence is granted **entirely** at the headteacher's discretion and you will be required to provide evidence of the need for your child to be absent from school.

When deciding whether or not to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will consider such issues as:

- The reason for the request for exceptional leave
- Previous requests for exceptional leave
- The time and duration of the leave
- Your child's record of attendance
- Learning that will be missed and the disruption that may result for both the pupil and classmates

**WARNING:** If you take your child takes any unauthorised leave in term time or takes extended leave without the prior approval of the school, you may be liable to a £60 Penalty Notice per child.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days; if not it is increased to £120. The payment must be directly to the local authority. Parents may be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of 28 day period, the local authority may decide to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

I wish to apply for exceptional leave for:

Name(s) of child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Period of absence requested from school:

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ inclusive

Reason for absence during term time:

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Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORISED** The School agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

**Absence dates** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ No. of days

**UNAUTHORISED** The School does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reasons:

Headteacher's Comments:

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SIGNED..... Headteacher

Date.....

**Appendix B:**

Date...

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: (add child's name)

According to our records ..... was absent on the dates shown and at the time of writing we do not appear to have received a valid explanation.

Please supply a reason for ..... absence next to the date(s) on the reply slip below in order that our attendance records can be amended.

We would be obliged if you would call the school by 8.50am if ..... is going to be absent in the future.

Yours sincerely

Miss Black  
HEADTEACHER

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(Child's name)

Date of absence:

Reason for absence:

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Signature: ..... Date: .....