



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

educate protect love serve

Attendance Policy

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we believe that outstanding attendance and punctuality is essential if pupils are to take full advantage, receive the greatest benefit from their education, raise attainment and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. The school aims to achieve outstanding attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and partner agencies can work collaboratively. We aim for a caring environment that enables and encourages all members of our school to reach out for excellence which is facilitated by each child being at school every day that it is open, and arriving on time.

Statutory duties

In matters of attendance this school takes account of:

- The Education Acts 1996, 2002 and 2005.
- The Education (Pupil Attendance Records) Regulations, 1991.
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(Amendment) Regulations, 1997.
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(Amendment)(England) Regulations, 2001.

Aims

- To improve the quality of school life.
- To maintain a culture in which outstanding attendance is 'normality'.
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents, carers and staff that the school values outstanding attendance and punctuality, and to recognise that daily attendance is an achievement in itself.
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.

Objectives

- To involve the children in their school attendance.
- To improve communication with parents about regular school attendance.
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children's attendance.
- To recognise the important role of class teachers, learning mentor, deputy head and headteacher in promoting and monitoring outstanding attendance.
- To ensure time and organisation within school enables the aims and objectives to be met.

Responsibilities and Procedures

Parents:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a daily basis, punctually and full time.
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school before the start of registration at 8.55am. Doors into school are opened at 8.45am, and time should be allowed to enable children to manage their belongings.
- *If a child arrives after 8.55am his/her parent/carers should report directly to the school office.*
- Parents must ensure that if their child is to be absent that they contact the school on the first morning of absence, and on each subsequent morning of absence. This may be by phone, or in person.

School:

- The school will continually monitor and record attendance in accordance with statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to each child's educational progress and achievement.
- Registers will be called twice daily, promptly at 8.55am and 1.15pm, as part of an orderly start to the school session.
- Children who arrive after 8.55am will be marked as 'late' (code L).
- Registers will close at 9.30am and 1.30pm. Any child arriving after that time will be recorded as 'late after close of register' (code U) which is then classed as an unauthorised absence for that session. Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but that of others.
- Registers will be marked using the symbols advised by Cornwall Council.
- Should a pupil be absent at morning registration, unless a message has been received, the school will attempt to contact, by 9.30am, the pupil's parent or guardian.
- Termly attendance and punctuality figures will be reported to parents directly at the end of each term.

Types of absence

- Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. That is why information about the cause of absence is required.
- Parents may not authorise a child's absence, only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents.
- Absences are authorised for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments if they unavoidably fall in school time, exceptional family circumstances, involvement in approved educational enrichment activity, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.
- The school does not have to authorise illness and medical evidence may be requested in the form of a medical appointment card, copy of consultant letter, prescription, or sight of medicine.
- Other authorised absences could be for licence modelling or filming with limitation on the number of days agreed by the school.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, such as absences which have not been explained, day trips, or holidays which have not been agreed. This type of absence can lead to legal proceedings.

Absence

Within St Mary's we are aspiring to ensure all children have at least 97% attendance. This will ensure that the children have every opportunity to receive the greatest benefit from their education, raise attainment and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. To enable parents to understand what real attendance looks like we have created the table below.

Percentage Attendance	Number of days off school
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99%	2 days
98%	4 days
97%	6 days
92.5%	3 weeks
90%	4 weeks

To promote outstanding attendance any child's attendance below 96% will be investigated and parents contacted where necessary. Once a child's attendance reaches 94% parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer to discuss support that could be put in place to increase attendance. If a child's attendance is 90% or below it will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer and where there are unauthorised markings the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Holidays during term time

Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for the purpose of family holidays. Absence for holiday will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the headteacher. Parents should write to the headteacher to request permission. If a parent chooses to take their child/ren out of school for a holiday the school is obliged to inform the authority, who may then decide to implement a fine.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% (20 days) or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to address this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and this is combined with academic tracking. Any child seen to have reached the PA mark of 10%, or, who is at risk of moving towards it, will be prioritised for referral. If this arises the child's class teacher, the deputy head or headteacher will contact the parent/guardian about their concerns which may lead to an Action Plan. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral support system and all cases of persistent absenteeism are automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility, as such failing to attend school on a daily basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Partnerships

At St Mary's we very much value the partnership we share with parents, children, staff, governors, the community and the Education Welfare Officer in matters of attendance and punctuality.

Whilst any child can be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for a variety of other reasons. Experience has taught us that such problems are most effectively resolved within the secure partnership between school, parents and child. If your child is reluctant to attend, or you are worried for any reason, then you should contact the headteacher. The pastoral resources in school can help to support difficult times.

Attendance strategies

- **Excellent attendance and punctuality will be promoted and celebrated in assemblies.**
- **The school will provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each child.**
- **Excellent attendance and punctuality will be promoted, celebrated and conveyed to the whole school community by newsletter.**
- **Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral practices.**
- **Individual support for pupils with high levels of absence.**
- **The use of home-school agreements to reinforce partnership with parents.**

Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure that it is effective, this policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually to reflect current practice and guidance.

Compiled by: Senior Leadership Team	Revision Number:
Approved by: Governors –October 2017	Revision date: Sept 2018
Shared with parents	October 2017