

	Aspect Policy	Version: 5 Pages: 5	Last up-dated: May 2019 Last Version: May 2018
	Authorised: Full Governing Body St Mary's Catholic Primary School St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust	Date: November 2020	Review due:2021 Reviewed:
Attendance & Collection Policy			

With Jesus as our guide
We promise to care for one another
To work hard
To build a community in Christ's Love

Introduction

At St Mary's, we recognise that good attendance is important for the well-being of pupils in both their personal and academic development. We are committed to co-operation between the school, parents and pupils to achieve the best possible attendance. Less than full attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. Accordingly, the school will actively pursue the aim of full attendance and punctuality in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole.

All children of compulsory school age should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents / carers (including those with parental responsibilities) have a duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually. The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are:

- The child was absent for medical reasons
- The LA failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- Permission was granted by the school or there was unavoidable cause.

Aims of the Policy

- To place the child at the centre of all that we do.
- To foster positive, supportive relationships with families and the wider community.
- To provide models of excellence drawing on the expertise of our highly skilled team.
- To provide an enquiry/ character/ value based curriculum, that promotes the values of resilience, adaptability and perseverance.
To promote life-long learning through developing a whole school

culture of challenge and growth. To prepare learners for a future in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

- To ensure regular attendance of children at St Mary's Catholic Primary School is no less than 95%.
- To maximise the opportunities for pupils in St Mary's Catholic Primary School.
- To promote children's well being by regular attendance at school.

St Mary's Catholic Primary is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We recognise that positive learning behaviours and excellent attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. For children to reach full potential from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other arrangements. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. Local Authorities (LA) have a duty to satisfy themselves that children who are not in the school system are receiving a suitable education. If the LA believes that a child is not getting a suitable education, it has a duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve a notice or a school attendance order on a parent. The notice requires the parent/carer to satisfy the LA that the child is receiving a suitable education while the order requires the parent/carer to register the child at a named school. LAs also have responsibility under sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school. This duty is often exercised through the Attendance Advisory Service and Attendance Officers (EWOs). They also have the following legal powers to enforce attendance: • School attendance orders • Prosecution for irregular attendance • Penalty notices for irregular attendance • Education supervision orders. Whilst it is not a legal measure, school and the LA can use parenting contracts in their efforts to improve a pupil's attendance.

Why is regular attendance important?

Learning Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

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 and

within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:- • Attendance • Behaviour Management • Health and Safety • Access to the Curriculum • Anti-bullying. Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding concern.

Promoting regular attendance Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

We will: • Report on individual pupil attendance as a % in end of year pupil reports

- Praise improved and excellent attendance, particularly through the school reward system of class dojos for character muscles.
- Celebrate with end of year certificates where pupils have had attendance over 95%, but will take account of sickness, medical and SEND needs.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child; we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or Early Help. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Registration (Please see the Covid Addendum added to the end of this policy, which highlights changes to attendance due to lockdown and the return to school from the 1st of September 2020.

- The school day begins at 8:50am, however doors open at 8.40a.m.
- Class teachers take the register and mark present or absent.
- A child arriving late into school but before registration closes (9:00am) will receive a L mark in both by the class teacher to indicate this.
- After this time, children are recorded as un-authorized after registration closes on the electronic register which is completed by the class teacher - Parents must sign the child(ren) in.
- Each school day is split into two sessions. The second session commences at 1.30pm. Same procedure as above.
- If children leave during the school day they must be signed out by a parent/guardian at Reception, providing a reason for leaving.
- Any child who is absent and the teacher is unaware as to why - they must inform the office who will contact the parents.
- On Friday, all electronic registers are checked by the office as this is a legal document.
- If a child is not in class the teacher must insert the correct code. (See appendix for code)

Absence due to Illness

If a child is ill, parents must ring or text before 9:30am on each day of the absence, outlining the reason for the absence and the expected duration if possible. Parents can leave a message by pressing the absence option on the school switchboard. This is an essential procedure so that the class teacher can be informed, for the school to register the correct code and for the school to keep accurate records.

If the school office has not been contacted by 10am a phone call or text to parents to confirm the child's whereabouts and reason for absence will be made. Please state your child's symptoms, so the school can advise accordingly and not just that the child is ill.

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments during the school day should be avoided, and be made out of school hours. However, if unavoidable, the appointment should be arranged for as late as possible in the school day (e.g. after 3pm). The pupil should attend school before and/or after the appointment wherever possible. Whole day absences for medical appointments are unacceptable unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Parents/carers must request a leave of absence and attach/ show (can be on their phone) medical appointment cards/letters for the Headteacher to authorise. Leave of Absence Request Forms must be submitted to the office before the appointment date. Should it be absolutely necessary to attend a medical or dental appointment, we ask parents to contact the school office **and to provide evidence of the appointment (appointment card/ phone message or prescription)**. Pupils must be returned to school as soon as possible and follow the correct signing in procedure.

Authorised absence reasons

The following is a list of reasons, which are likely to count as authorised absence: • illness or other unavoidable cause • Emergency medical or dental treatment (where appointments cannot be made outside school time) • Religious observance. Transport failure where travel to the school is not within walking distance • Participation in a school-approved performance or sporting activity. • Education off-site approved by the school. • Exclusion • Bereavement of a close family member.

The following is a list of reasons, which are likely to count as unauthorised absence: • Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily • Absences which have never been properly explained • Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark • Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays • Day trips and holidays in term time.

Planned Absence During Term Time

Parents must ensure their children attend school regularly and, in particular, during school and national assessment weeks, i.e. May. School Term dates are given out a year in advance and reminders are sent out regularly on newsletters.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The following amendments will come into force on 1st September 2013

- Term Time Holiday

The amendments make clear that head teachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be

away from school if the leave is granted, this is done in consultation with the school's EWO.

Authorisation for absence will be considered in exceptional circumstances. These include:-

- Holidays on religious grounds
- Bereavement
- Compassionate leave of absence
- Unexpected traumatic incidents
- Unplanned emergencies

Whilst there are financial benefits for families of taking holidays in term time we must also acknowledge the problems this creates within schools. This undermines the education of all children in the school, not just those children who might be absent, affects behaviour and places an increased burden on teaching staff. Parents might, after considering the above, still decide that they wish to take a holiday in term time. They will still need to inform school in writing as the school legally has to account for the whereabouts of every registered child on a daily basis in term time. A letter of acknowledgement will be sent in reply to parents.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. We must have a minimum of 2 contact numbers. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Penalty Notices & Poor Attendance

Persistent Absence

- The DFE considers a pupil to be a 'Persistent Absentee' when attendance falls below 85% in any fully completed term.
- The school monitors attendance weekly. Concerns will be flagged up to the headteacher, when it drops below 95% and any attendance below 90% will be discussed with the school's attendance officer in monthly meetings.
- Where there are concerns about attendance and the prospect of a pupil becoming a Persistent Absentee, parents are contacted and

planned interventions begin (letter issued by school stating concern, parents meet with school, close monitoring by school, use of Family Support Worker, Attendance Officer).

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The following amendments will come into force on 1st September 2013

- **Penalty Notices**

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60.00 if they pay within 28 days; or £120.00 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescale for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1st September 2013, pay £60.00 within 21 days or £120.00 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

This policy will be reviewed annually by *Governors*

Reviewed November 2020

Date of next review: as required

Please see in line with the Covid Addendum on Attendance below.

COVID ADDENDUM

Attendance Expectations in March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was increasing, we made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

This addendum applies from the start of the Autumn term 2020 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply. We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

2. *Guidance and definitions* This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) guidance on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year. This addendum reflects the latest advice from the Leicestershire Local Authority. In section 4.2 of this addendum, where we refer to 'close contact', this means: Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin) Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual, Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person. This definition is from the DfE's guidance on full reopening for schools (see number 9 in 'the system of controls').

3. *Attendance expectations.* It is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age to attend school unless: They have been granted an authorised absence by the school in line with our normal attendance policy. They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (see section 4, below)

4. *Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies* We will only accept 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be: Against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social

Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the
incidence of transmission of coronavirus.

4.1 Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does. The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day that their child needs to self-isolate. The pupil will stay at home until they or the symptomatic person they live with receives their coronavirus test results. If the pupil's test result is negative: the pupil will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness). If the person the pupil lives with tests negative: the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school. If a member of the household is self-isolating because they have been a close contact of someone who has tested positive, the child can attend school, unless they develop symptoms.

4.2 Pupil or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result. The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible. This can be done by speaking to the school office, the Head teacher or if in out of school hours by Class Dojo to their class teacher, who will inform the Headteacher. Pupils who test positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste). If a member of the pupil's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 14 days. The pupil must do this from when the member of their household first had symptoms, or the day the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result. (This is regardless of whether you chose to get a test & it comes back negative. See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

4.3. Pupil has to quarantine after travel abroad. The parent/carer must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's exemptions list. The pupil must quarantine for 14 days on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.

4.4 Pupil is required to shield during a local lockdown. The parent/carer will notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home and will provide proof of their shielding letter by sending a scan to office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk or a photocopy to the school address or screen shot to the class Dojo account. The pupil will stay at home until

the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carer to set the expectation that they can return to school. The school will also send remote learning home & the expectation that if the pupil is well enough they will complete the learning.

4.5 Remote learning provision

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education. Our approach / expectations regarding remote education will be sent out via the class page or Class Dojo -paper packs can be requested if necessary. We will keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning, but we will not track this information in the attendance register. Daily timetables are placed on the class pages of the website with links to watch clips for each lesson, so that the school is prepared immediately for a child self-isolating to continue the class learning at home. On calling the school to notify about a child self-isolating parents will be asked if the child can access the class website. If not, paper copies and books will be provided. The work can be submitted for feedback from the class teacher on Class dojo and the homework email account. Children who are self-isolating will also receive a weekly well-being call from the designated lead in school. Children in the vulnerable category, may receive more frequent phone calls from the schools DSL, when self-isolating.

5. Recording attendance. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is: Present Attending an approved off-site educational activity Absent Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances' (as defined in normal attendance policy) Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see appendix 1 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them) Pupils must arrive in school at their designated time slot on each school day. 8.40-9am, due to staggered starts. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at the end of lunch.

6. Following up absence. This is checked daily by the Head teacher and the office staff. Numbers are filled in on the daily DFE form.

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will: Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by phone call, text message, email, Dojo message or home visit, notify their social worker, where they have one. If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will have discussion & follow up with support from the attendance officer. Please note that a parent may be asked proof of evidence that they have a testing appointment for the Coronavirus, evidence that the child is positive or evidence that they must self-isolate their child due to another household member being tested positive, if the child's attendance has fallen to below 85% and the child has had frequent time off for self-isolating.

6.1 Legal sanctions Our normal rules on legal sanctions apply.

7. Monitoring arrangements This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or Department for Education is updated. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board if changes are made.

Appendix 1: pupil absence codes The following codes are taken from the DfE's addendum to their school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year. If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

Code Definition Scenario

Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) X

Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results. X

I Illness Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)

Illness Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive

X Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive

X Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive

X Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)
Pupil has to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country

X Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)
Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield

X Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)
Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown

Appendix 1

Registration codes

/	present am
\	present pm
B	educated off site
F	extended family holiday agreed
J	interview
S	study leave
L	late (before registration closed)
C	other authorized circumstances
G	family holiday not agreed
M	medical/dental appointments
T	traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
D	dual registration
H	family holiday (agreed)
P	approved sporting activity
V	educational visit or trip
O	unauthorized absence
E	excluded
I	illness
R	religious observance
W	work experience