

	Aspect Policy	Version: 5 Pages: 5	Last up-dated: May 2021 Last Version: May 2021
	Authorised: Full Governing Body St Mary's Catholic Primary School St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust	Date: November 2023	Review due:2025 Reviewed:
Attendance & Collection Policy			

Mission Statement: We grow with Jesus to be the best we can be.

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.

As the LCC policy on attendance: "Improving Attendance is everyone's Responsibility."

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 and progress. 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.

Do you realise how many days you have had off this year?			
Approximate days absent since September			
Attendance Rate	By end of Autumn term	By end of Spring term	By end of Summer Term
100%	0	0	0
95%	4	7	10
90%	7	13	20
85%	11	19	30
80%	14	27	40

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 such as 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/ (EWO) education welfare officer 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

- The school day begins at 8:45am, however doors open at 8.35a.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-authorised 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 1.00pm. 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.
- If a child leaves for a medical appointment, evidence must be shown to the office staff.
- 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 9:00am 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, check any safeguarding concerns and for the school to keep accurate records.

If the school office has not been contacted by 9.30am 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. • Suspension • 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. (Education Welfare Officer/ Local Authority.)

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

If you wish to take your child out of school during the term time, please write to the Headteacher and return the letter to school before the leave is taken: stating the start and end date that your

child will be absent and the reasons for taking leave of absence during Term time. Do not just email, phone or message on class dojo.

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.

Penalty Notices - Unauthorised Holidays • Penalty notices have been introduced by the Government under the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 S444A and the Education Act of 1996. • These may be issued by the Attendance Officer to each parent where there is an unauthorised holiday. The criminal justice and Court Services Act 2000 has introduced the more serious "aggravated offence" for failing to ensure regular school attendance by adding 444 (1) (A) to the Education Act 1996.

The Education Welfare Service have agreed where a child has had 2 periods of unauthorised leave for which the parent has been issued with a Penalty Notice (for each occasion), on the third occasion, no Penalty Notice will be issued and that parent will be taken straight to Court under the higher level aggravated offence. This means that the parent may be subject to a much more severe penalty i.e. a maximum fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months in custody or, a community order which may involve them doing a number of hours of unpaid work. •

The grounds for issuing a penalty notice include:

Where the Head Teacher has granted consent for exceptional leave between identified dates, but your child does not return on the agreed date.

Where a parent does not request permission to take their child out of school for a holiday.

Where a parent takes a child out of college for a holiday even though permission has been refused by the Head Teacher.

Telephone numbers- illness in the school day

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to always have your contact numbers. 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.

If a child is referred to the first aid staff because they feel unwell, they are assessed by the First Aider on duty. • If it is deemed, they are not well enough to attend school, telephone contact is made to parent/carer who are asked to collect their child from school. Should we be unable to make parental contact, the child will be asked to wait near reception until we can contact a parent. • All children leaving school due to illness will be signed out by office staff.

Support for Attendance

LCC policy: "Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together."

The school will monitor and support students and parents to maintain regular school attendance. With LCC and the school's Education and Welfare Officer we will work together to:

- Prevent patterns of absence from developing by promoting good attendance from the outset
- Intervene early by using data to spot patterns of absence before they become persistent and work with families to remove the barriers to attendance
- Target support for persistent and severe absentees with all agencies and the school-working together to re-engage pupils.

The Head teacher is the designated lead on attendance

The designated lead will:

- The Designated lead will ensure there is a clear sequence of interventions to support students
- Analyse their data regularly and prioritise families to work with to understand and address the reasons for absence. May use DFE data portal.
- Work jointly with the EWO and Local authority on an agreed plan/ approach for every persistent absentee
- Inform a pupil's social worker if they have an unexplained absence or leave school the school roll.

- Work with the EWO and LA to formalize support where voluntary help hasn't been effective, through use of parenting contracts or other forms of legal intervention.
- Share data electronically with the DFE and continue to inform the Local Authority of pupils not attending regularly or being added to or removed from roll.
- . In addition to the measures to promote attendance outlined above, the school will:
 - o Make and send Attendance graphs/figures regularly to the parents of students who fall below identified criteria - beginning at 95%. This well-established, successful strategy provides a valuable tool for parents and the college to work together.
 - o Parents may also log on to Arbor at home to keep a close check on their child's attendance.
 - Work with the Headteacher to identify student poor attendance and punctuality. The school together with the Attendance Officer will put in place a series of support strategies to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices & Poor Attendance

Persistent Absence

- The DFE considers a pupil to be a 'Persistent Absentee' when attendance falls below 90% 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).

School Interventions to reduce a pupil's Persistent Absence, Lateness

- Phone call home on the day of the absence, to see whether the child can come to school or the school's senior leadership team, can assist in bringing the child to school, if it is parent illness causing the absence.
- Possible visit to the family home by the Senior Leadership team if the school is not contacted about the absence.
- Call home to parent or message on dojo to discuss the absence/punctuality and how school can help families to reduce this- such as

applying for the household fund support, a nursing referral or if it is a SEND need.

- First warning letter home, stating the percentage absences, requesting a meeting with the Headteacher to offer further support/ strategies.
- If attendance has not improved, external agency support will be sought from the Leicestershire Local Authority Attendance Team, Social Services and the school's Education Welfare Officer. A multi-agency meeting may be called in school with the parents.
- If attendance does not improve, a further letter requesting a formal meeting with the Headteacher, Parents and Education and Welfare Officer to set targets to improve attendance. This second warning letter may be a request by the Education Welfare Officer, for a medical note by a doctor, if the child is off school for illness- for each day of absence.
- A formal referral will be made to the school's education and welfare officer, if the above interventions have not improved the pupil's attendance and a penalty notice may be issued.

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.

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.

This policy will be reviewed annually by *Governors*

Reviewed November 2023

Date of next review: as required

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