

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Principles

High levels of attendance are an important target for the school as only through high attendance can pupils receive their entitlement and achieve their potential. It is a key component of the Every Child Matters agenda. Poor attendance is a recognised barrier to achievement. We will therefore strive to monitor and check attendance and support pupils (and families) who are experiencing difficulties over attendance.

Attendance can only be authorised by the school.

Personnel

The person responsible for attendance matters at St Mary's is the Headteacher, Mrs A Brogden.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for liaising with School Support Officers; setting school attendance targets with the County Council and monitoring progress towards these; ensuring the completion of the annual DFE attendance return; reporting to the Governing Body of the school on attendance matters.

Procedures

- The registers will be completed by class teacher at the start of each day and class teachers at the start of the p.m. session. Pupils are not allowed to complete the register.
- The register will be kept open until the end of the registration period.
- Pupils arriving after the register has been taken shall be marked as late.
- All pupils must be marked as present, absent or late; no pupils should be left with a blank space for any session.
- All pupils returning from absence must bring a note explaining the reason for absence.
- The Headteacher will monitor the attendance of all Year Groups by checking registers, requesting print-outs of statistics at least once every two weeks.
- The Headteacher will send letters to parents regarding attendance and punctuality matters.
- The Headteacher will complete the annual DFE attendance return, the annual LCC Attendance Target sheet and termly reports for the Governing Body.
- Attendance/Punctuality will be a standing item on Community Governors meetings agendas.
- All pupils leaving school during the school day must be signed out at reception.

Lateness

Pupils are actively encouraged to arrive at school on time. Emerging patterns of lateness will be monitored and parents informed where necessary. Learning Managers will monitor lateness through statistics from the attendance system.

The Headteacher will monitor lateness each morning. If lateness is persistent the Headteacher will contact the parents.

On occasions the register will need to be left open in exceptional circumstances (eg inclement weather, school buses unavoidably delayed). On these occasions all staff will be informed of the arrangements, delayed pupils will be required to report to the general office on their arrival at school to register. Registers will not normally be kept open for more than one hour.

Leave in Term time

Leave during school term time is **not allowed**. School holidays are the times when families should take leave.

It is the role of parents, guardians and school to encourage 100% attendance at school for every child. To grant leave in school time gives the message to the child that their school work and school life is not important and such a message can be very damaging.

Leave of absence from school can only be granted for exceptional circumstances. This is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. In judging whether to approve requests the following criteria will be used:

- Attendance records for the previous year/current year greater than 95%
- Previous requests
- Year group (Y2 and Y6)
- The nature of the leave

Evidence provided in writing, confirmed by external (professional) body showing why the leave of absence is needed by the child.

Each request for leave of absence will be judged individually by the Headteacher. Cheaper flights, availability of certain days for parents, already having made the booking and financial commitments/loss will not be accepted as reasons to allow leave of absence.

Where leave is not granted parents should be notified in writing.

Where absence occurs despite leave not being granted or applied for, absence should be recorded as unauthorised. Leave of absence should not be granted in retrospect.

If a parent takes their child out of school when leave has not been granted by the Headteacher or the child is absent for over 5 school days, a Fixed Penalty notice will be issued. In extreme circumstances a pupil may be removed from the school roll when a parent has chosen to remove them from school for an extended period without the permission of the Headteacher. In such cases the parents will need to reapply to the school to have their child readmitted to the school roll.

Fixed Term Penalty Notices

Parents [Defined under section 556 of the same act] have the responsibility to ensure a child's full attendance at school.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School will use Fixed Term penalties for leave that is taken of 5 days or more (unless leave is granted for exceptional circumstances), for repeat offenders, when all other strategies have been used and have failed. In all cases a final warning will be issued, in writing, before a Fixed Term Penalty Notice is issued.

Fixed Term penalties are an alternative to prosecution if a parent/carer has failed to ensure his/her child has attended school. They are issued by the local Authority under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. Prosecution for this offence can lead to Penalties that can range from £120 Fixed Penalty Notice to £1000 fine for each parent and a criminal record.

Fixed Term Notices can be used for unauthorised absence, unapproved leave and persistent lateness to school.

All parents will be advised of the school's intention to use the notices and each year a reminder will be issued.

Date of Policy: September 2013