

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

*Learning and loving on our journey with  
Jesus.*



To the greater glory of God

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **AIM**

The aim of St Mary's Catholic Primary School's Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.

There are clear links between attendance and attainment and attendance and safeguarding children therefore the whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: governors, parents, pupils and all school staff.

This policy is based on guidance from:

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997 and 2001 Education Act 1996

DfEE Circulars 10/99 and 11/99 on *Social Inclusion: Pupil Support*

DfES Guidance 2003: *Advice on whole school behaviour and attendance policy*

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Local Education Authority May 2004 updated July 2005 *Guidance for schools on the law relating to school attendance and pupil registration.*

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This is available from the office for parents to read and on the website. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

### **PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually.

Section 444 of the Act says:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

(NB: Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. Ideally this should be by telephone or in writing (01628 622570) on the first day of absence. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. In term time absence for holiday will not be authorised. Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more in a term may incur a fine from the Local Authority.

Attached is a Guide for Parents which may help to answer some important questions.

### **PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties which might prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or another adult.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

### **SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

All the staff will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:

- ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence); if in doubt refer to head teacher;
- pupils may be marked as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances if they are unable to get to school because of serious disruption to travel caused by a weather related emergency (snow or flooding);
- responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and recording the contact;\*
- consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern; #
- promoting regular school attendance (for example by contacting parents on the second day of absence if parents have not contacted the school) \*
- awareness of regular or patterns of absence and referring to office for investigation.

Awards will be made each week and termly for the class with the highest attendance. Individual pupils with full attendance each term and academic year will receive awards. In addition, schools are required to provide families with clear understanding about attendance and punctuality.

A Guide for School Staff is attached.

*Key:*

# = Responsibility of the Head teacher

\* = Office Staff

### **REVIEWING THE POLICY**

The school will review this policy every three years or earlier if necessary.

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### *1. When does my child need to be in school?*

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and the afternoon register for Reception and Key Stage 1 at **1.10 pm** and Key Stage 2 at **1.20pm**.

### *2. What happens if my child is late?*

Registration finishes at **9am** in the morning and **1.15\1.25 pm** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between 8.55 am and 9am he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after 9am he/she will be marked as **absent**.

Pupils who arrive after registration should be brought to the School Office by a responsible adult who will sign the Late Book. If a pupil is late on several occasions, parents will be contacted to discuss reasons/difficulties for lateness.

### *3. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?*

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence and, if necessary, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence and this will be shown on your child's end of year report. 10 or more unauthorised absences in a term may result in penalty notice.

*4. What is a Penalty Notice?* Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

*5. What are the costs?* Payment within 21 days of receipt of a Notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. This is per parent per child.

### *6. If I send a letter will this mean absence is authorised?*

For absent pupils of compulsory school age, the register must record whether or not their absences are authorised. If no acceptable reason for the absence has been received at the time of registration, the absence is **unauthorised** unless or until a satisfactory reason is given. A note or explanation from a pupil's home **does not** mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence rests with the school.**

### *7. What reasons will the school accept for absences?*

Illness

Day of religious observance

Emergency dental/medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)

Family bereavement

Difficulties caused by travel due to severe disruption from weather.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness, you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

**8. *What is unacceptable?***

The school will not authorise absence for holidays, day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

**9. *Will the school contact me if my child is absent?***

The school will phone or write to you if we have not heard from you on the first day of absence. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

**10. *Can we take family holidays during term time?***

Holidays during term time **will not** be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. You must complete a leave of absence form if you wish to take your child out of school during term time. If annual leave is governed by employment conditions e.g. armed forces, a letter from the employer may be required.

Exceptional circumstances will be interpreted as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which out-weights the loss of teaching time.

**11. *I am thinking about sending my child on an extended trip overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?***

The school recognises that such trips are important and help children keep in touch with their extended family. These visits should be taken in holiday time.

**12. *What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?***

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning and eats a healthy breakfast. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a reading record and/or a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it regularly.

**13. *My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?***

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Welfare Service is based at:

**Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Education Department,**  
Town Hall St Ives Road Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 1RF Tel: 01628 683542

## A GUIDE FOR STAFF

### REGISTRATION

#### *Calling of the registers:*

Class teachers are responsible for attendance registers

Registers will be called promptly at 8.55 am and 1.10\1.20 pm by the class teacher.

Registers will close at 9am and 1.15\1.25pm.

If a pupil fails to arrive before the register closes, he/she will be marked absent.

Pupils who arrive late, but before the close of registration, should report to the Office where they will sign the late book.

#### *Who will amend the register?*

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed should also report to the School Office and sign the late book. School Office staff will amend the registers to indicate lateness.

#### *Monitoring Procedures:*

Head teacher will monitor attendance each term.

Admin staff will monitor attendance and reasons for absence each week.

Class teacher must bring concerns regarding attendance or lateness to the attention of the Head teacher immediately.

#### *Authorised/Unauthorised:*

Providing an explanation is received, an absence can be authorised for:

illness

dental/medical appointments

day of religious observance

family bereavement

the pupil is not within walking distance and no suitable travel arrangements have been made by the LEA

attendance at a Pupil Referral Unit

participation in an approved public performance

the pupil's parents are Travellers and the pupil is engaged in his/her parents' work.

It will remain unauthorised:

if no explanation is received from parents

looking after siblings

shopping trips

unexceptional special occasions, e.g. birthdays

family holidays.

If staff are unsure how to mark a particular absence, they should consult with the Head teacher or Admin officer.

#### *Keeping of Notes:*

Absence notes should be kept in appropriate part of the register until marked on the absence sheet then moved 'for filing'. Teachers must initial absence notes when actioned.

Absence notes should be filed by the Office staff.

#### *Following Up Absences:*

A school response is essential if there is no contact from the parent. In cases where there is doubt about an explanation received, contact should be made with the parent.

***Strategies Employed to Support Pupils and Parents;***

Copies of all calls and letters must be kept on file.

If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the class teacher will speak to the pupil's parents about their pattern of absences.

If there is no significant improvement, the Head teacher will contact the parents and invite them into school to discuss attendance.

Once point 3 is reached, the Education Welfare Officer should receive copies of all previous attempts made. This will be done through the Head teacher.

Acknowledging Good Attendance:

Certificates will be awarded each term for class with highest attendance.

Individual pupils will receive awards for full attendance each term/year.

***Support For Pupils Who Have Difficulties Attending School:***

Where pupils are absent with good reason (for example, because of exclusion or long-term illness) the class teacher will co-ordinate meaningful work to be sent home and will ensure it is marked on a regular basis.

When pupils have been absent for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised, they will be welcomed back to school and supported by teachers to ease them back into the work they may have missed.

**REGISTER CODES**

**PRESENT**

Unmarked register sheet

**ABSENT**

Black mark am pm

Authorised:

Educated of site B

Other circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions, performances,

other approved absences not covered by other codes) C

Dual Registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment) D

Excluded E

Family Holiday (not agreed) G

Family holiday (for which leave has been granted) H

Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments I

Interview J

Late (before registers close) L

Medical/Dental appointments M

No reason yet provided for absence N

Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other cod/description) O

Approved sporting activity P

Religious Observance R

Study Leave S

Traveller absence T

Late (after register closed) U

Educational visit or trip V

Work Experience W

Non-compulsory school age absence X

Enforced closure Y

Pupil not yet on roll Z

School closed to pupils #

Full guidance on codes for schools and LEAs from the DfES is available to read in the school office.

This policy was ratified by the Governing Body on

Date.....

Signed.....

This policy will be reviewed in spring 2020.