

St Marie's Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

The Love of Christ, nurture, guide and inspire us

Approving Body	Full Governors Committee Head/Leadership team	Review Term: 1yr/2yr/3yr Autumn Spring Summer
Signature:	Chair of the relevant body	December 23
Review Date:	October 24	Version: (applicable if changed within the review period, if no changes this would remain as version 1)

MISSION STATEMENT



'The Love of Christ, nurture, guide and inspire us.'

To do this we will:

- Be a Christian community that lives the Gospel values; 'Love of Christ' (Christ centred)
- Provide opportunities for all to grow and achieve by igniting a desire for learning; 'Guide and inspire' (Education)
- Be a haven of peace and love that enables all to thrive; 'Nurture' (Community)

Objectives: Christ Centred

- Provide high quality collective worship and enriching liturgical celebrations
- Enable our children to acquire an excellent religious education and develop their relationship with God
- Share faith, love and hope in the likeness of Mary, Mother of God
- Provide a safe harbour where all can succeed

Objectives: Education

- Have high expectations of ourselves and others in all that we do
- Value our pupils and staff, appreciating their uniqueness and individual talents, enabling them to achieve well
- Provide a curriculum that opens the world, in all its awe and wonder, to our pupils

Objectives: Community

- Create a peaceful, happy school where all feel welcomed and valued
- Nurture and grow our pupils and community in the Gospel values
- Celebrate each person as a beautiful work of art, created on God's image

Key Objectives and Priorities	Success Criteria
<p>Christ at the Centre</p> <p>1. Priority: Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Ensure that staff and pupils are clear on whole school expectations, routines and behaviours ✚ Pedagogy, policies and procedures are shared and implemented with fidelity ✚ Relationships across the school community become strong ✚ Staff seek every opportunity to promote learning within and beyond the school day ✚ Pupils and staff have the tools needed to ensure resilience in their learning and wider lives
<p>2. Priority: Aspiration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ School has unapologetically high aspiration for our children through a fully understood, common pedagogy ✚ All children can access a low floor-high ceiling, fully resourced, holistic curriculum that meets our high aspirations which staff are equipped to deliver ✚ Percentage of children at greater depth standards is rapidly closing the gap with national
<p>3. Priority: Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The staff structure, skills and knowledge meet the needs of the school ✚ 'The curriculum' is fully resourced and meets the needs of our children with effective schemes of work, curriculum knowledge and skills progression maps ✚ All staff receive high quality assured CPD that improves learning for all pupils
<p>4. Priority: Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Parents are well equipped to support children learning in school and at home ✚ Families are well supported to meet our aspirations for our children, i.e. through uniform and attendance ✚ Our community is well involved in school life, e.g. Parent Council, FAF group etc
<p>5. Priority: Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The school building and grounds are a safe place to work and play ✚ The buildings and classrooms promote our high aspirations

Introduction

St Marie's Catholic Primary School recognises the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. The aim of this policy is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within St Marie's Primary School to support learning and development.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment. To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that

the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.

St Marie's Primary School believes Teachers, Parents, Carers, Pupils and all members of the school community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring pupils attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality at St Marie's Primary School.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

Promoting regular attendance at St Marie's Catholic Primary School:

Promoting regular attendance at St Marie's is everyone's responsibility, staff, parent/carers and pupils.

- To help us all focus on this, school will ensure:
- Appropriate interventions are in place to improve punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes the school and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

- A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

Expectations of Parent/Carer

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.
- Ensure your child arrives for school on time. School gates open at 8:45am. Children should be in class by 9.00am.
- Nursery 8.45am to 3:30pm (lunchtime change over 8.40-11:30am and 12:30pm to 3:30pm)
- Please telephone the school if your child is to be late.
- If late, sign your child into school on the provided I-Pad in the reception area.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours.
- Contact school by 9:15am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond, to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Please contact the safeguarding team if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- In case of emergency, we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of two emergency contact details be provided)
- Appointment cards/slips must be provided by parents as proof if there is no alternative but to book in school time, e.g. if a specific clinic runs in school hours
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Absence Forms can be requested from the school reception. A meeting with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head teacher must always be held.

If a pupil is absent we will:

- Telephone and text the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9:15 am.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised a member of school staff may conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited to meet the school attendance Lead/safeguarding Lead and a member of the schools SLT.
- If absences persist the Head teacher and Attendance/Safeguarding Lead will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

Understanding types of Absence

St Marie's Primary School has to record every absence that a pupil takes from school, this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, by calling the school on the first day of absence.

Authorised Absence

- Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanations received, absences cannot

be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents, who make the decision to authorise absence from school. Evidence to support the decision to authorise an absence may be asked for by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised Absence

- Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to: Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings, etc.
- Absences that have not been explained.
- Pupils that receive U-Codes, which are given if a pupil has arrived to school after 9.15am. (If a child turns up to school after 9.15am, they will be given a morning absence mark)
- This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority.

From September 2023, St Marie's Catholic Primary School can issue penalty warning Notices (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued over 10 sessions/5 full school days of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

School holidays are not authorised by school during term time.

All parent/carers must write an authorisation request to the school Headteacher, if they wish to apply for their child to have time out of school.

Persistent Absence

- Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the school office in the first instance, where they will be sign posted to a relevant member of staff.

Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning.

- Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.
- 90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year
- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)- **School SLA Attendance Officers** – Joanne Lowry & Mike Hennessy

The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school.

The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists the EWO will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

Leave of absence in Term Time

- The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Parents/carers can receive a Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively.
- The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- A meeting prior to any absence in term time must be held with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher where by the process will be explained in detail to the parents.
- Parents must sign that they have received all relevant information from the school and provide any paper work, to support their application.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence.

- All pupils should be in class between 8:45 and 09:00 at the specific gates.
- Nursery starts at 8.40am (morning sessions) & 12.30pm (afternoon session)
- Gates are closed at 09:00am. Any pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late.
- If a pupil arrives late to school, he/she should enter via the pedestrian gate entrance and walk to the school main office. Children will then need to sign their registration mark on the I-Pad on the wall.
- Late arrival to school after 09.30am is classified as a morning absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, parents/carers will be contacted by the attendance lead or a member of SLT.
- If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the school office on 0151 477 8480, who will offer support to resolve the problem.

People Responsible for Attendance at St Marie's Catholic Primary School

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support therefore is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success.

As a school we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in every circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register.
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education (**CME**). This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, and this may involve liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

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- If your child is leaving our school, parents are asked to:
 - Give the Attendance and Safeguarding Lead comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing or via email.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education (**CME**). This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, and this may involve liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.