



St. Margaret Mary
Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed on: Autumn Term 2016

Ratified by Governing Committee:

(Chair of Committee) (Date) October 2016

Ratified by Full Governing body:

(Chair of Governors) (Date) October 2016

Date of review: Autumn 2017

Aims of the policy

St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary school seeks to ensure that all its children receive a full- time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills they will need and reach their full potential.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which children, staff and parents can work in partnership.

The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention when a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and work closely with families to encourage good attendance.

The school will encourage good attendance among children through a system of rewards.

The school Governors will monitor attendance closely and work with the Executive Headteacher on attendance issues.

By trying to improve attendance as a school we can effectively work towards meeting the outcomes of Every Child Matters for all the children.

Why regular attendance is so important

Everyone in the school community needs to be aware of the result of poor attendance on children enjoying and achieving.

Poor attendance can lower a child's confidence, self esteem, security at school and their academic success.

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.

St. Margaret Mary's will work together with parents and the Local Authority to improve attendance so we can all help all children to achieve their full potential.

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.

This policy is available on the school website and reminders will be published on newsletters, text messages and other communications.

Promoting Regular Attendance

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

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Weekly Celebration Assembly trophy for the Year Group with the highest attendance.
- Termly certificates and medals – bronze, silver and gold.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Annual raffle for 100% attendance

Registering and monitoring attendance

All registers are marked at the beginning of the **morning and afternoon sessions** in school. This is the first task teachers do in the morning and afternoon.

The school will monitor attendance on a daily basis and once a week analyse attendance records.

The registers are recorded electronically and the system is able to give us an instant analysis of attendance and punctuality. This will be looked at by the Executive Headteacher/Deputy Head and staff in the school.

At the end of the academic year parents will be given a copy of their child's attendance record for the year. The Executive Headteacher/Deputy Head will also share the attendance record with parents throughout the year if there are any concerns.

Attendance will be discussed at Governing Body meetings and will be included in the Executive Headteacher's Termly Reports.

Lateness

The school policy is to encourage punctuality but actively discourage lateness as it seriously disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. Obviously the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. A pupil who arrives late after doors have closed must come to the office with their parents and the parents must sign a late register stating the time they arrived and the reason

the child is late.

How we manage lateness

Registers are marked by 9:00 a.m. and by 1:00 pm KS1 and 1.15pm KS2 and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time for each session.

The attendance register closes at 9:30 am for the morning session and 1:15pm KS1 or 1:30 pm KS2. for the afternoon session. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Executive Headteacher and/or Deputy Head to resolve the problem.

If a child is late more than twice in one week a letter will be sent home unless the school is aware of any exceptional circumstances.

All letters concerning punctuality and attendance will be copied to the child's file.

If a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Executive Headteacher or Deputy Head.

Collection at the End of the School Day

If a parent is late collecting their child the child will wait outside the school office.

When parents come to collect their children they will have to sign them out and give a reason for being late. If a parent is going to be late they should phone the school and inform them of when they will be arriving and why they are late. The school discourages late collection of children as we do not have staff that are free just to supervise the children and it can be distressing for very young children.

We understand there are exceptional circumstances when a parent or carer will be late but if a persistent pattern of late collection arises the Executive Headteacher or Deputy will speak to the parents and may write a letter home concerning late collection.

At the end of the school day if children are not collected and their emergency contacts details are not current, the school may have to involve Social Services.

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 in writing.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993).

a. Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments - If the school is

satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents or on production of an appointment card. The school would ask parents to try and make dental appointments outside school hours.

- b. Exceptional leave/ holidays** – The governors **will not** be granting any holiday leave during term time. **Holidays taken during term time will be marked as unauthorised.**
- c. Family Bereavements** - The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

If a child is sick on either side of a holiday the school may request medical evidence to show the child has been ill. This evidence may be a medical appointment card from the doctors.

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 Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- 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
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Others

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Absence procedure

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and every day during the illness.

- Send a note in or e-mail on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence -you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- A member of staff will visit home to ensure that our safeguarding policy is being fulfilled.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Executive Head teacher or Deputy Head if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority if attendance moves below 91%.

The school will always support parents who have difficulty with writing letters.

If the parents do not inform the school about their child's absence the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Leave during term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

In line with the Department for Education guidelines, there is **no** entitlement to time off in school time to go on holiday. **Holidays taken during term time will be marked as unauthorised.**

The Executive Head and Deputy Head will be monitoring the registers and will be looking at all unauthorised absences.

Information about any parents who take unauthorised holidays for their children will be passed on to the Participation Team who may issue each parent with a Penalty Notice for each child. The amount of each Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the notice(s) remains unpaid you will be summoned to the Magistrates Court and could be fined up to £2,500 for each matter.

Where Parents/Carers that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices then take their child/ren out of school again without authorisation from the Headteacher - further Penalty Notices may not be issued. In these cases, the matter will be referred to the Participation Team for each parent/carer to be summonsed the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A), Education Act 1996.

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

If a child's attendance falls below 95% and there are concerns a letter will be sent from the school to inform the parents and they will be invited to contact the Executive Headteacher/Deputy Head to discuss their child's attendance.

This child's attendance will also be monitored closely on a weekly basis.

If the school has continued concern regarding the child's attendance after speaking to the parents the school will inform the Local Authority of their concerns.

Those families referred to the Executive Head/Deputy Head may be involved in the Attendance Panel system, which involves the school taking early intervention when there is an area of concern regarding a child's attendance.

During this process, Parents are informed of improvement that needs to be made over a specific time frame. Where parents fail to take their responsibilities seriously or no improvement is brought about in the child's attendance within a specific time frame, prosecution proceedings will be initiated.

The attendance of those children involved in the Attendance Panel system will be monitored very closely.

Persistent absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA children and their parents are subject to Action Plans and these plans may include: allocation of additional support through a Counsellor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes (therapeutic curriculum) and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority.

Missing Children

It is the duty of all who work in the education service to secure the safety of children in their charge.

If the school has concerns about a child who is missing they will report their concerns to the relevant agencies.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about different things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we do not then something important may be missed. There

will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **95%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our children can be amongst the best in Carlisle.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

The Local Authority

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information.

Summary

St Margaret Mary's has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff is committed to working with parents and children as the best way to ensure as high level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

This Policy will be review annually or if there are any changes concerning pupil attendance.

