

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School



*Inspiring Children to love learning
and live in the
light of Christ*

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved December 2023

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Chair of Governor's: Angela Scull

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Introduction

St Mary's Catholic Primary is committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all pupils so that they can achieve their potential and establish a positive working ethos early in life. We believe that regular and punctual attendance is essential in underpinning these ambitions. The vast majority of our children have a good record of attendance and punctuality. There is, however, strong evidence to suggest that poor habits established in the early years of education follow on into secondary school and employment.

We expect all children to attend school, and be on time, every day that school is open, as long as they are fit to do so.

Legal Requirements

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, makes it clear that parents **do not** have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday. If parents take a child on holiday in term time this will be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil's school attendance record. There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and this will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Requests for absence will always be refused for pupils with attendance below 95%.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

An absence may be authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness and the school has been notified and updated by a parent or guardian. Only the Head Teacher or other designated staff have the authority to decide if an absence can be authorised.

Unauthorised absences occur when a child is out of school for reasons such as holidays, shopping, birthdays etc.

Aims

The staff of St Mary's School will:

- actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all of our children
- positively acknowledge good or significantly improved attendance
- regularly monitor attendance and punctuality. A regular check will be made where attendance is in danger of falling below 95% and again at 90%. This is monitored over half a term with a letter sent to parents being sent home where there is no satisfactory explanation e.g. long-term illness. These progressively grow stronger where improvement is not noted unless there are very specific reasons.

- emphasise to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- work proactively with parents and external agencies where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality and aim to resolve problems as efficiently as possible
- aim to reduce the incidence of unauthorised absence and eliminate term-time holidays

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils should:

- attend school regularly and arrive punctually
- arrive well prepared for the day ahead
- speak to an adult if they are experiencing difficulties with attendance or punctuality.

Parents/ Carers should:

- ensure maximum school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities knowing that the bell rings at 8:53am in the morning for a prompt 8:55am start.
- ensure that children arrive punctually and well prepared for the day ahead
- contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.30am and on subsequent days should the absence be ongoing. They should respond promptly to written enquiries regarding attendance
- ensure that their child is collected promptly at the end of the school day or from an after-school club etc and/ or register with the Out of School Care Club if necessary
- endeavour to arrange medical or dental appointments during holidays or outside normal school hours
- consult with the Head Teacher regarding occasional absence such as attendance at external exams, approved sports activities, induction days or family gatherings e.g. funerals, days of religious observance.

School staff should:

- keep accurate records of attendance for all pupils, and monitor these on a twice - daily, termly and annual basis. Children who arrive after 8.55am should be recorded as late. Children arriving by 9.25am will be recorded with an authorised late mark but, after this point the mark will be unauthorised late. Absences for which no explanation has been given despite further enquiries should be recorded as unauthorised.
- contact parents should there be no explanation for a pupil's absence by 9.30am and follow this up with a written communication if absence remains unexplained
- provide information on attendance and punctuality as required by the Local Authority or DfE
- provide parents with an annual summary of attendance data as part of the end of year report
- provide a sympathetic response to pupil concerns about attendance or punctuality
- seek support and advice as appropriate from external agencies in cases where there are concerns about attendance
- report any non-attendance after the 10th day of continuous absence in cases where there has been no communication with the parent or guardian, despite the best efforts of the school to contact the family. Such circumstances should be reported to the Local Authority.

School Governors should:

- agree and adopt an Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- require the Head Teacher to report any concerns about attendance or punctuality at termly meetings of the Governing Body
- consider, on an annual basis, if the school needs to buy into the brokered attendance support service or set aside money for this purpose in the budget
- be aware and take account of the advice given by the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS), in their Risk Assessments or other reports as requested.

Changes to Regulations regarding Leave of Absence:

Following changes to regulations which came into force in 2013, we have found that attendance has improved overall and requests for leave of absence have significantly reduced.

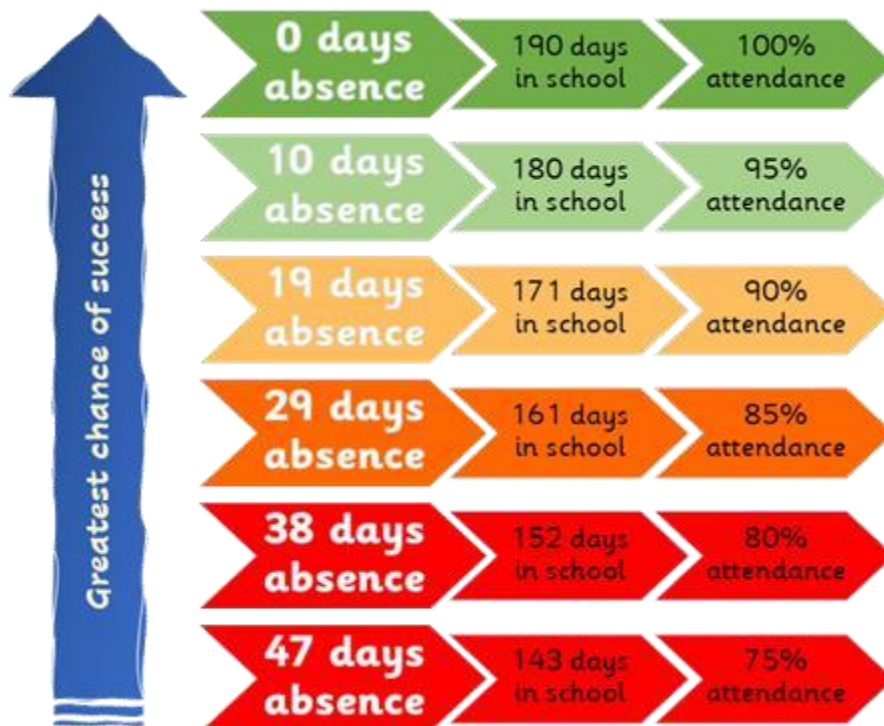
In the event that problems persist with a small number of families or where families take unauthorised leave, we reserve the right to make a referral to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) in cases where attendance has fallen below 85%. This could result in a legal Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £120 per parent.

Any leave of absence could result in a referral to WAS for a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £120 per parent, per pupil as well as a potential appearance in court.

See Appendix A

Punctuality

- Minutes late are recorded in SIMS.
- Minutes late reports are sent home with annual reports if lateness is an issue.
- Persistent lateness will be followed by a letter home to parents.
- If the problem persists parents will be invited into school for a meeting.



Appendix A

Leave of Absence

The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many days a child may be absent from school **if** leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.