



**Our Mission Statement:**

*"Love one another... as I have loved you...  
Then everyone will know that you are my disciples"*

John 13. 34

**Status**

Supplementary

**Rationale**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos in:

- promoting children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensuring that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- ensuring that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Aims**

This policy aims to ensure that the children at our school achieve the highest attendance record possible supporting the highest level of pupil achievement.

**Promoting Regular Attendance**

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

Actions taken to achieve this include:

- Giving parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Reporting to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance in their annual school report.
- Contacting parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Rewarding good or improving attendance through praise and certificates.

**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.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

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 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 which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

### **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 education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached PA or is at risk of moving towards that it is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

Any PA pupils and their parents will be subject to additional support through the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Absence Procedures**

If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.20. by telephone or e-mail.
- Or call into school and report to the class teacher or the secretary.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 87%.

### **The Education Welfare Officer**

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 Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt assemblies and lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect our children to be onsite by this time.

Registers are marked at **8.55am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. 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. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. We urge parents not to take holidays during school time. If this is unavoidable, parents may apply for **one** period of absence in a school year up to a maximum of 10 days.

We strongly recommend that parents gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking your holiday.

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- During assessment periods (the second week of each second half term)
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the school's target of 90% for any individual or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

Targets for the school and for classes will be displayed in the school to encourage participation by all in reaching these.

Parents are informed of their child's attendance on a termly basis.

Through the school year, absences and punctuality are monitored to identify where improvements need to be made.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Governing Body will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy based on data provided by the Head teacher and ensure that all necessary action is taken to achieve the desired result.

This policy is reviewed annually.

### **Date of next review**

Autumn 2017

**Target attendance for 2016-2017 is 96%**