

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Attendance and Leave of Absence Policy (Pupils)



<u>Role</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
Executive Head/Head of School/Governor	To monitor attendance throughout the school
Admin Staff/Class Teacher	To monitor attendance of individual children
Family Liaison Officer/ PP Champion/SENDCo	To raise level of attendance of those identified as being at risk
Education Welfare Office	To support the school in achieving its objectives by following LA guidelines

Mission Statement

By working together at St Mary's School, we aim, through Jesus Christ, to share God's love, helping our community to learn, grow and make a difference.

Each student is important to, and valued by the community at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy. The school is committed to providing the best possible education for every pupil. Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. Failure to attend and erratic attendance leads to insecurities, school refusal and falling behind other students.

Objectives

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy we are striving to improve school attendance. The target for every child should be 100% however illnesses do strike so the minimum attendance target should be 97%. The school aims to achieve this by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents, local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance (including lateness and/or patterns of absence) and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with the Executive Head/Head of School if a problem is identified. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised by the school. The school intends to maintain high levels of attendance and improve attendance figures and maintain this standard in order to be in-line with National.

Punctuality is a key part of good attendance and will be monitored in the same way to ensure every child maintains a good standard of attendance.



Arrival Time

School will open at 8.30am when children will be welcomed by members of staff and directed to their classroom. Due to the nature of the building (St. James' House), the open door policy is temporarily suspended. Class teachers will help children to settle in time for the first registration at 8.45am. School finishes at 3.10pm (this is pending due to final arrangements made during Lent 2).

Equal Opportunities

In developing the policy, St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy has taken into account the fact that the school is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice which guards against disadvantaging any section of the community.

Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and support
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive
- To ensure data is available and used effectively by school leaders and with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Involving Parents

Parents will be advised on our attendance policy:

- When their children first start at our school
- Through the school website
- In Newsletters
- Annual reports to parents
- In the school brochure
- Parents' Evening

Procedure:

- Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence).
Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence).
- It is expected that parents or carers will provide an explanation (details of child's illness/symptoms) on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, email, telephone, personally at the office, medical appointment card.
- If a child's absence due to illness continues for more than three days the school will alert the Educational Welfare Officer who may visit to establish reasons for continued

absence. Parents/carers will be required to produce proof of medical appointment, this should be presented to the school office on the child's return to school.

- If no contact, explaining the child's absence, is made by parents or carers, then the school will contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a home visit after 3 days of unexplained absence. **This contact will be recorded in the register.** Referral will automatically go to EWO if no contact is made after 3 days.
- The school will regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded by the school with a certificate at a special assembly at the end of each term and at the end of the year. A class with full weekly attendance will be rewarded in assembly.
- Children with a weekly attendance of 100% will be rewarded with a raffle ticket which will be drawn termly in each phase, with an opportunity to receive a prize.
- At regular intervals, attendance will be monitored and reported to the Governing Body. If a child's attendance is below the minimum requirement of 90%, school will activate the identification and referral process (see **Absence Escalation Procedure**).
- In line with the government directives all schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service and further legal action can be taken.

Completing the Register

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils can and should be perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive children formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session.
- The first register of the day will be taken at 0845, children who arrive after 0845 but before 0915 will be marked as late (L), children who arrive after 0915 will be marked as unauthorised absence (U).
- Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.
- An electronic register system is in place. New staff are given training as part of their induction.
- The school has a computerised register. The Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998

Absence Escalation Procedure

Attendance and lateness is tracked on a weekly basis by the Academy's Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and SENDCo, and on a monthly basis by the Head of School. Identified Governor will monitor attendance and Head of School will report termly in Headteacher's report to Governors.

Absence Escalation Procedure	
Initial Absence	<p>If no contact is made with the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First day text home. • Children whose attendance is below 90%, FLO makes phone call home • In identified cases where parents cannot be contacted, home visits will be made. <p>Class teacher will alert the parent to their concerns and monitors this over a given time.</p>
Stage 1	95% and below - Stage 1 letter to reinforce good attendance to be sent and (monitor attendance monthly) (see appendix 1)
Stage 2	95% and below - phone call from FLO to be made
Stage 2	90% and below - Stage 2 letter to be sent home. Medical proof required for all future absences (prescribed medicines, prescriptions, doctors' notes, appointment confirmation cards or texts and hospital letters). If not received, the absence will be unauthorised. Meeting arranged with FLO & SENDCo - completion of Parent Agreement at 90%. (see appendix 2)
Stage 3	<p>Further decline in a four week school period will result in referral to the Local Authority. The referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parents and a print out of the child's attendance herringbone.</p> <p>Meeting arranged with FLO & SENDCo to offer an Early Help Assessment (see appendix 5)</p>
Stage 4	Local Authority action can result in 15 day notification. Further decline will result in court action.

Lateness

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, parents/carers will be contacted. If persistent lateness continues, parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting with the Family Liaison Officer.

Safeguarding

At St Mary's we believe in supporting the whole family; our first duty of care, however, is to the child; where there is any doubt regarding the safety and wellbeing of a child, we will report it immediately to Social Services. Our preferred option is an open and honest relationship with our parents or carers; if there are genuine problems please talk to us.

Leave of absence

The DfE have removed from the attendance regulations the ability of Head teachers to authorise up to 10 days absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday.

Examples of exceptional circumstances.

- Significant family bereavement, i.e. Mother (step), Father (step) principal carer or sibling,
- Significant family illness to Mother (step), Father (step), sibling or principal carer.
- Involvement in court proceedings, either in the family courts or in criminal proceedings.
- Disclosure of significant abuse where a short leave of absence may be beneficial to recovery.
- A day will be authorised for a religious ceremony of a parent or sibling.
- Extra-curricular activities will be authorised subject to the correct documentation being received from the relevant Official Body within the specified time-scale of 10 school days.

All cases must be presented in writing to the Head of School and/or discussed in person. The onus is always on the parents to provide evidence to support applications for leave of absence.

Family requests for Holidays for family weddings (other than parents or siblings) or to see relatives are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances, the availability of cheap flights or holidays are also not deemed to be exceptional circumstances.

Parents who take their children out of school during Term Time, and the absence has not been authorised, may be issued with a Penalty Notice, in conjunction with the Education Welfare Officer and in line with government directives.

St. Mary's appreciates that in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for longer planned absences, however if a child is absent for longer than 21 consecutive days after an agreed return date, can legally be removed from the school roll and may be liable to prosecution. A letter will be sent to the parent after the first 4 days of absence outlining the procedure for taking a child off role in order to give the parent an opportunity to contact the school explaining the extended leave.

What can parents do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away (telephone, email or letter)
- Try to make appointments outside school time
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the class teacher or head teacher
- Talk to the Family Liaison Officer

You may contact the Derby City Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation.

Parents will be informed of school holiday dates and important exam weeks at the beginning of the school year. In this way, we hope that parents will be able to work with us in keeping absences and disruption of education at school to a minimum

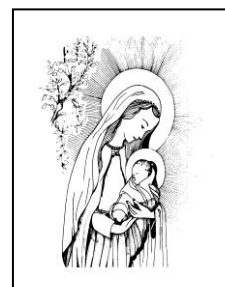
Date of Policy: **April 2021**

Date of next review **April 2023**

Appendix 1 - Stage 1 Letter for Absence

St. Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy Part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Broadway, Derby, DE22 1AU
Executive Head: Mrs A C Greaves
Head of School: Mrs G Novak-Lemmings
Tel: 01332 554831
Email: admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk
Website: www.stmarys.derby.sch.uk
Twitter: [@Stmarysderby](https://twitter.com/Stmarysderby)



Parent/Carer of
<FirstName> <LegalSurname>
<StuAddL1>
<StuAddL2>
<StuAddTown>
<StuAddPostcode>

Date:

Dear Parent/carers of <FirstName>

As part of an ongoing programme to raise pupil attendance and attainment we are contacting parents of children who have a high level of absence and/or whose attendance is below **95%**, as many parents may not be completely aware of how much school their children are missing over a long period.

Following a recent inspection of the school attendance register I note that this has fallen to <PercentAttendYTD>

	Percentage	Comment
Green	97% and above	Congratulations, your child has attained a strong attendance level. Please keep this up.
Amber	90% to 97%	Your child is below our 97% attendance threshold. We understand this may be due to sickness absence. This does need to improve.
Red	Below 90%	Your child's attendance is well below the 97% threshold. A rapid improvement needs to be made, you are invited to a meeting to discuss attendance. Your case may be referred to the Education Welfare officer.

Attendance is now a cause for concern as this level of absence will be having an impact on your child's educational progress.

Primary school is usually the first place where children learn the importance of regular time keeping and attendance. There is a clear link between regular attendance and achievement. Pupils who have low attendance miss out on learning the basic skills at primary school, they will find it hard to catch up, particularly in the basic areas of reading, writing and where the learning is incremental and gaps in understanding mean the pupil will struggle to get on to the next stage and stay in line with their classmates.

As a result, we will now be monitoring their attendance for signs of improvement and hope this will be achieved. All future absences will require a doctors/hospital note, appointment card or prescribed medicines. If these are not received all absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

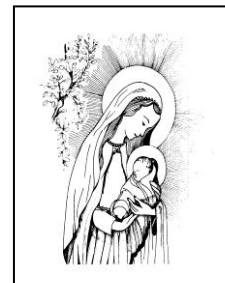
Yours sincerely

Mrs G Novak-Lemmings
Head of School

Appendix 2 - Stage 2 Letter for Absence

St. Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy Part of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Broadway, Derby, DE22 1AU
Executive Head: Mrs A C Greaves
Head of School: Mrs G Novak-Lemmings
Tel: 01332 554831
Email: admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk
Website: www.stmarys.derby.sch.uk
Twitter: [@Stmarysderby](https://twitter.com/Stmarysderby)



Parent/Carer of
<FirstName> <LegalSurname>
<StuAddL1>
<StuAddL2>
<StuAddTown>
<StuAddPostcode>

Date:

Dear Parent/carers of <FirstName>

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As a result, we will now be monitoring their attendance for signs of improvement and hope this will be achieved. We would like you to attend a meeting with Mrs Andrews (Family Liaison Officer) and Mrs McCreedy (SENDCo) to discuss the next steps on:

Yours sincerely

Mrs G Novak-Lemmings
Head of School

Appendix 5 - Meeting Proforma



Attendance Meeting - 2019

Meeting for:		Class:	
<u>Present at the meeting:</u>			
Name	Mrs McCready	Mrs Andrews,	Parent/Carer
Signature			
Time meeting started:		Time meeting ended:	

<p>1. In your opinion is your child's attendance at school: Excellent, Good or Needs to improve? (circle as appropriate)</p>
<p>National expectation for attendance is at least 97%</p>
<p>2. Child's attendance rate for Advent/Lent/Pentecost term:..... %</p> <p>3. Child's current attendance is:%.</p>
<p>4. Reasons given by parent for poor attendance: (e.g. poor health of the child, poor health of the parent, child care arrangements, holidays, family circumstances)</p>

5. Support Required:

Poor health of child	School nurse referral
Poor health of the parent	Parents living in the same area to support in these cases? Move to a school closer to where they live?
Child care arrangements	Car sharing, seek out class PASP representative, attend school coffee mornings, use DA as mediator to support them in making links with other parents.
Holiday in term time	Remind about the legal requirement that all children receive their full entitlement to a good education.
Family circumstances	Early Help Assessment referral (support from SMC and DA)
Other	

6. Action required:

Attendance Agreement:

Attendance will be

By / / 2021/2022