



## 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**

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

Therefore, 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 continue to strive 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 Family Liaison Officer (FLO) in the first instance before consulting with the Executive Head and/or 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.

## **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 SWAY 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)
- The school will regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Children will receive a Dojo point on arrival which will contribute to their overall total
- 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.
- 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, text appointment, personally at the office, medical appointment card.
- If no contact, explaining the child's absence, is made by parents or carers, then the school will contact the home on the initial day. If no contact is made after 3 days of unexplained absences, then a home visit will be made on day 4 by the Family Liaison Officer (FLO). In exceptional circumstances the FLO may do a home visit on day 1 of absence.
- If a child's absence due to illness continues for more than 3 days, the FLO will contact the family for a well-being check.
- If the explanation for a child's absence is regularly repeated, then it is expected that medical advice is sought and shared with school otherwise this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- At regular intervals, attendance will be monitored and reported to the Governing Body. If a child's attendance is below 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
- **These are a legal document.**

## Absence Escalation Procedure

Attendance and Lateness is tracked on a weekly basis by the FLO and SENDCo, and on a monthly basis by the Head of School. An identified Governor will monitor attendance and Head of School will report termly in Headteacher's Report to Governors.

<b>Absence Escalation Procedure</b>	
<b>Initial Absence</b>	<p>If no contact is made with the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First day text home.</li> <li>• Children whose attendance is below 90%, FLO makes phone call home</li> <li>• In identified cases where parents cannot be contacted, home visits will be made.</li> </ul> <p>Class teacher will alert the parent to their concerns and monitor this over a given time.</p>
<b>Stage 1</b>	<p>95% and below - Letter to reinforce good attendance to be sent (monitor attendance on a 4 weekly basis)</p> <p>90% and below - Letter to be sent home. Meeting arranged with FLO and/or SENDCo - completion of an Attendance Parental Agreement</p>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<p>After 4 weeks - review of Attendance Parental Agreement (APA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in attendance - maintain or end APA</li> <li>• Further decline in attendance - maintain APA and offer further support including an Early Help Assessment and discussion with the Educational Welfare Officer at the Local Authority.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b>	<p>Further decline in a 2 week period will result in referral to the Local Authority.</p>
<b>Stage 4</b>	<p>Local Authority action can result in a 15-day notification. Further decline will result in court action.</p>

## Lateness

	FS2 & KS1	Key Stage 2
Children should be at school by	0830	0830
Doors close at	0845	0845
First registration is at	0845	0845
School finishes at	1510	1510

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, refer to identification and referral procedures.

<b>Late Escalation Procedure</b>	
<b>Stage 1</b>	<p>Initial concern letter to monitor punctuality to be sent (monitor punctuality for 4 weeks) U code to be used when late at this time</p>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<p>If timekeeping does not improve, EWO informed and penalty notice will be issued.</p>

## **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. A child attends school for 190 days within a year. School is closed for 175 days, therefore providing ample time for families to take children on holiday.

### Exceptional circumstances

#### Leave of absence Form

All cases must be presented in writing to the Head of School and/or discussed in person or over the phone. The onus is always on the parents and carers 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.

The school 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/carer after the first 4 days of absence outlining the procedure for taking a child off role in order to give the parent/carer an opportunity to contact the school explaining the extended leave.

#### **What can parents and carers 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 Family Liaison Officer
- Talk to the Head of School

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

Parents and carers 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:** **November 2023**

**Date of next review** **November 2025**

Dear Parent/carer of <FirstName>

Date

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>

	Attendance	Behaviour
<b>Exceptional</b>	Attendance is 99% or higher. Always in school on time.	A role model for other pupils due to their excellent behaviour.
<b>Good</b>	Attendance falls between 97% and 98.9%. Very rarely late to school.	Always meets the St Mary's Expectations for behaviour.
<b>Room for Improvement</b>	Attendance falls between 94% and 96.9% or occasionally late to school.	Occasionally misses learning opportunities due to behaviour.
<b>Cause for Concern</b>	Attendance is below 93.9% or frequently late to school.	Incidents of poor behaviour cause disruption for other pupils.

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 confirmation of medical appointments and/or prescribed medicines. If these are not received all absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Mrs G Novak-Lemmings  
Head of School

Dear Parent/carer of <FirstName>

Date

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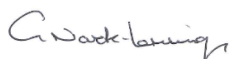
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We would like you to attend a meeting with Mrs Andrews Family Liaison Officer) and Mrs McCreedy (SENDCo) to discuss the next steps on:

Yours sincerely



Mrs G Novak-Lemmings  
Head of School



**RE: Lateness**

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing regarding child /children's frequent late arrivals to school. In the last academic year Child has been late for school on ... occasions. I am sure you will agree this is a concern.

Arriving on time to school is not only a legal requirement and can affect attendance levels, arrivals after the register has closed are classed as an unauthorised absence.

Arriving on time also prepares children for the start of the day and gets them into the right frame of mind for learning. If children arrive late it is not only unsettling for them, but it also disrupts the teacher and the learning of other children in the class if the teacher has to repeat the task. Regular lateness may also contribute to a poor attitude towards school routine which may then develop into an attendance problem.

Primary school is usually the first place where children learn the importance of regular time keeping and attendance. I am sure you will agree the importance of children getting into a good school routine at an early age. This not only ensures they get the best possible educational start but also helps in developing good school attendance habits for the future.

We will continue to monitor time keeping and we look forward to seeing this improve this term. If you would like to discuss this matter or how we can support you, please contact me on the above number/ email.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Andrews  
School Family Liason Officer