



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



Bishop Chadwick
Catholic Education Trust

Attendance Policy

Aim:

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School we aim to bring out the best in every child. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and enable children to achieve their full potential. This helps to establish a positive working ethos early in life.

Rationale:

The school ethos aims to assist all pupils to reach their learning potential and we believe that children are more likely to maximise their achievement and attainment if they attend regularly. We recognise that by working together parents and school can improve a pupil's life chances by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance. Good attendance is important because statistics show a direct link between higher achievement and good attendance.

To support good attendance the school will:

Monitor attendance daily

The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular uninterrupted attendance is vital to the child's educational progress.

School doors open at 8.45am and all external doors and gates are locked at 8.58am for the safety of all the children.

Registers will be called twice daily at the start of each morning and afternoon session. The class teacher will close the register by 9.05am. The office staff will hold the register open for a maximum of 30 minutes (in accordance with DfE guidelines) to enable children to be marked late. Any children arriving after the gates are locked will enter via the main entrance; those children will be marked late by Office staff. The reason for late arrival will be recorded in the late book.

Attendance information entered into registers will be cross-reference by the Office staff with names in the late book and absence messages left on the school answer phone.

The office staff will provide the HLTA with responsibility for Attendance and Pastoral Support, with a breakdown of daily reported absence of children whose parents have not made contact with the school or whose absence is a cause for concern. Concerns about individual absences will be followed up by the HLTA for Attendance and Pastoral Support.

Monitor attendance weekly:

Should a class teacher have particular concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality this will be raised with the HLTA for Attendance and Pastoral Support.

The Head teacher discusses absence, during a weekly meeting with the Attendance Officer. Attendance of all children falling below 95% is discussed within this meeting, as is any unauthorised absence (1 session or more) or unauthorised leave of absence (not reported to

the Head Teacher). As a result of these discussions the HLTA for Attendance and Pastoral Support will contact parents directly to discuss pupil absence (this may take the form of a telephone conversation or request for a school meeting), reasons for absence and how the school can support families to improve attendance. The aforementioned discussions are recorded in the school attendance log and safeguarding documents where necessary.

Should school attendance not improve, due to repeated unauthorised absence of 2 sessions or more, the school will contact the parent(s) in writing asking them to attend a meeting in school to complete a Parenting Contract. Should the parent decline a Parenting Contract, this may be used in evidence during any future prosecution.

If the school or EWO are still concerned about absence, despite a Parenting Contract being in place, school may ask for a doctor's note to confirm a child's illness, before authorising an absence.

In the event of prolonged unauthorised absence (10 sessions within a ten week period) resulting in the child's attendance falling below 85%, the Head Teacher may request that attendance is legally monitored by the local authority Attendance Officer.

At the end of the school year, parents are informed in their child's report about their attendance, listing the number of authorised and if any, the number of unauthorised absences.

Requesting absence during term time:

Absence during term time has the potential to interrupt continuity of teaching and learning, as well as disrupt the educational progress of individual children. St Mary's Catholic Primary aims to minimise the amount of time lost to term time absence through a policy which actively discourages parents from arranging periods of absence during term time unless in *exceptional circumstances*.

This policy is intended to be a clear statement regarding the issue of term time absence, and to ensure that the amount of teaching and learning time lost to absence such as term time holidays, is as a results, minimised. The Head Teacher will be consistent in making robust and informed decisions with regard to the authorising/non-authorising of leave of absence to the ensure that parents develop a consistent understanding of the response which they may expect.

The Head Teacher will decide what might constitute as "*exceptional circumstances*".

Such circumstances might include the following:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate period of absence might help the child concerned better deal with the situation.
- An occasional day for a significant family event.

Legislation and requests for term time absence:

Previously, regulations allowed the Head Teacher to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to 10 school days per year. The Head Teacher was also permitted to grant extended leave for more than 10 school days in 'exceptional circumstances'. From the 1 September 2013, amendments to the 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations removed references to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments make clear that the Head Teacher may NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*.

Please note that holidays take during term time, without prior permission from school, could result in legal sanctions for irregular attendance being taken. These legal sanctions are set out as amendments to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments will again come into force from 1 September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedure for issuing penalty notices (a £60 fine payable within 21 days or £120 within 28 days) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.

To support good attendance school expects parents to:

Remember that parents have a legal, as well as moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory age attend on a regular and full time basis.

Ensure your child arrives on time each day. We do understand that there will occasionally be circumstances beyond your control when your child is late. If this is the case, we would much rather you bring your child to school late, than not at all.

The school monitors regular late arrivals as this can be unsettling for your child entering the class after the lesson has started and extremely disruptive for the rest of the children in the class. If your child is repeatedly late for school a letter will be sent reminding you of your commitments to the school.

Ensure that your child has everything they need ready for the next school day e.g. reading book and reading record book, homework, PE kit, musical instrument (if needed for a lesson that day).

If your child is unwell, please contact school to let us know the reason for the absence. You can contact us by telephone before 9.00am on 0191 489 8336 (you can leave a message on the answer phone), school should then be kept informed of the child's continued absence.

If you cannot get a medical appointment outside of school hours please let the class teacher know, in advance, that she/he has an appointment so that we can have them ready for you. Please try to ensure that your child returns to school after the appointment in order to finish the school day.