

St. Mary's RC Primary School



Maximise your potential, attend school everyday

E V E R Y D A Y C O U N T S

Attendance Policy 2021/2023

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Statement of Intent

St. Mary's Primary School is a Good school (as rated by Ofsted) and your son/daughter plays a vital role in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. School should be a happy and enjoyable experience for all students. It is a place where learning takes place, where friendships are formed and where social and educational skills are developed within a safe and secure environment.

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Pupils who fail to attend regularly experience educational and social disadvantage at school and their future life prospects can be impaired. They can also be at risk of drifting into anti-social and criminal behaviour. Pupil absence can also disrupt teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same classroom environment.

To ensure your child reaches his/her full potential it is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly and punctually, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

1. Legal framework

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the

Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school](#)

[attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school

2 attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures at St. Mary's R.C. Primary School.

2.2. The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

2.3. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.

2.4. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school.

2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Attendance Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.

2.7. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.

2.8. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **"Absence"** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.

- An **“authorised absence”** as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason. – Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed under the exceptional circumstance discretion.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil’s possible sessions) Overall attendance no higher than 90%

4. Training of staff

4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.

4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

5.1 Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

5.2 Respond as soon as possible to any contact made by the school;

5.3 . Contact school daily to inform of reasons for absence;

5.4 In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the pastoral support team

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Send you letters regarding concerns about your child's school attendance;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Headteacher if absences persist;
- Inform you that further absences may not be authorised without medical evidence; 4
- Request that a Penalty Notice be issued regarding unauthorised absence;
- Refer the matter to the schools allocated Attendance Officer if there is an ongoing issue or concerns regarding attendance;
- A reminder letter will be sent out once attendance falls below 92%;
- If attendance continues to fall you will be invited for a pre-referral meeting with the attendance team

6. Contact information

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your son/daughter by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

7. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO):

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 their Pastoral Team. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the EWO 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 SAO 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.

8. Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your son/daughter 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 lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school doors open at **8.45am** and we expect your son/daughter to be coming into class at that time.

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

Unauthorised late from **9:15** a.m.

***Arrival after 9.30am will count as an absence for the morning session**

At **9.00 am** the registers will be closed.

The afternoon registration starts at **1:15 pm** and we expect your son/daughter to be in class

at that time.

All pupils who arrive late must sign in at the **Late Room(or School Office)**.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your son/daughter 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or Pastoral Lead to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your son/daughter to school on time.

9. Term Time leave:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your son/daughter's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law for time off in school time to go on holiday.

9.1. At St Mary's R.C. Primary, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

9.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

9.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term time leave.

Exceptional Circumstances

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are **rare, significant, unavoidable and short**. And by 'unavoidable' means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.'

Suggested examples of exceptional circumstances(not an exhaustive list)

- *death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil*
- *life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil*
- *parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)*
- *leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time*
- *leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school)*

9.4. As a school we follow Bury Local Authority guidelines concerning term time absences.

9.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record* will be taken into account.

*For the purpose of approving leave, the previous 12 months attendance, from the date of the request will be taken into account and may influence the decision to apply issue a fine

9.6. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

10. Religious Observance:

The school will authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the day must be:

- exclusively set apart for the religious observance;
- set apart by the parent's religious body, not the parents.

11. Appointments

11.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

11.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.

11.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be collected at the school office by a parent/carer. However, these visits to the GP or dentist will count as an absence but will then not be eligible for 100% attendance at the end of the term/year. Discretion as for chronic conditions(see below) will be given for special procedures/ dental hospital visits which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours- providing an appointment letter is produced..

Chronic Illness

A number of children have long term health conditions that may require time of school for tests/ observations of check-up clinics. Absence on these days will be authorised and will be not count against your child in our internal reward system for excellent attendance, even though they will be an absence on our official data.

11.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

12. Young carers

- 12.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 12.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity

from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

- 12.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and

each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

13. Monitoring and review

- 13.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

- 13.2. St. Mary's attendance target is 97% percent

- 13.3. This policy is reviewed every two years by the headteacher; the next scheduled

review date for this policy is **September 2023**.

- 13.4. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff

and parents.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils; this will ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Signed: **J Travis** Headteacher

Signed: **D Simpson** Chair of Governors

Appendix 1



St Mary's RC Primary School

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE – Exceptional Circumstances

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are **rare, significant, unavoidable and short**. And by 'unavoidable' means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.'

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school for an exceptional circumstance, please complete this form and return it to the school office at least 3 weeks before the intended departure. We advise you not to make bookings prior to receiving authorisation.

As identified in our school attendance policy, penalty notices may be issued to parent/carers who have not sought prior permission for leave or who remove pupils after a request has been refused. Your child may also lose their place at the school.

Failure to pay a penalty notice could result in the Local authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

CHILD'S NAME _____ CLASS _____

DATES OF ABSENCE: From _____ To _____

NUMBER OF DAYS: _____

REASON FOR ABSENCE:

REASON WHY YOU ARE UNABLE TO ARRANGE THIS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES: (Please provide us with as much detail as possible to aid our decision).

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

For office use only:

Unauthorised _____ Days Authorised _____ Days Code _____

Appendix 2



Dear Parent /Carer

Your request for _____ days leave of absence has been considered and will be recorded as follows:

Unauthorised _____ Days Authorised _____ Days

Should you have any queries about this decision please contact the Headteacher via the school office.

Child's Name _____ Class _____