

Attendance Policy



Through respect we will work together in Christ to develop the whole person

Written: September 2019

Date of Review: September 2021

Leader: Hayley Grier

1.0 Introduction

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School recognises the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. The aim of this policy is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within St Matthew's Catholic Primary School to support learning and development.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. ***As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.***

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School believes Teachers, Parents, Carers, Pupils and all members of St Matthew's Catholic Primary School community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring pupils attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

2.0 Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality at St Matthew's Catholic Primary School.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

2.1 Promoting regular Attendance at St Matthew's Catholic Primary School:

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils.

To help us all focus on this, St Matthew's Catholic Primary School will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to improve attendance and punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes St Matthew's Catholic Primary School and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
-
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, text message or home visit termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies. This will happen every Monday, the class attendance monitor will take about their class attendance and punctuality for that week.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

3.0 Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why precise information about the cause of any absence is required. We have now developed a Leave of Absence form to be filled in when a child is not in school. We will also contact you on different colour papers to outline your child's attendance.

97% 100% Green

96.9 94% Orange

Below 93.9% Red

3.1 Expectations of Parent/Carer

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours.
- Contact school preferably by 8.30am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this text to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact Mrs Grier Pastoral Care Manager if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of three emergency contact details be provided) and a work telephone number
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays. Leave of Absence Forms can be requested from the school reception and also be completed on school website.

3.2 If a pupil is absent we will

- Telephone and text the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.10am.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised a member of school staff will conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited to meet the Pastoral Care Manager Mrs Grier.
- If absences persist you will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer Miss Carol Deering.

4.0 Understanding types of Absence

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School has to record every absence that a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by calling the school on the first day of absence and in writing on the pupil's return.

4.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory

justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no

explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not

approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 St Matthew's Catholic Primary School can issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 schools days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

4.3 Persistent Absence

- Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.

- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the Pastoral Care Manager Mrs Grier in the first instance.

5.0 Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning.

Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

6.0 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school.
- The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists the EWO will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

7.0 Leave of absence in Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday or leave during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Absence should be requested in advance, all travel during school term time requires a meeting with Mrs Grier (PCM). It is vital that as much information is provided when a child is to be absent from school due to holiday/ leave for example- confirmation of travel details, expected dates of departure/return and the address/accommodation or where your child will be staying

8.0 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence.

8.1 How we manage lateness

The school day starts and electronic registers are taken at 8.55 am by the class teacher and pupils receive a late mark if they are not in their class by that time. St Matthew's School recommends that pupils arrive by 8.45am when the school door opens

- If a pupil arrives late to school parents/carers will receive a text message/telephone call to inform them of their child's late arrival.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice.

If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the Pastoral Care Manager Mrs Grier who will offer support to resolve the problem.

9.0 People Responsible for Attendance Matters at St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support therefore is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success.

10.0 Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register

- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give Mrs Grier officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.



LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

(Please bring proof /copy of travel documents to school for your child's records)

Name of child: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Year Group: _____

Date(s) of leave from school: From: _____ To: _____

Reason for leave of absence: _____

Destination Address: _____

Contact number whilst child on leave: _____

If your child is leaving the UK, please provide the following:

Flight / Ferry details: _____

Date of departure: _____

Date of return to home address: _____

If your child fails to return to school when expected a referral may be made to the Children Missing Education (CME) team within the Local Authority

Please note, as part of our safeguarding procedures, any information incorrectly provided could result in further investigations being considered. It is your responsibility to ensure you keep school up to date with any change of circumstances should they arise whilst your child is on leave of absence.

Please give this form back to Mrs Grier

