



ST MARY'S
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

School Attendance Policy

Pupil Attendance

Due to COVID-19 the schools attendance policy has been reviewed in preparation for full school opening in September 2020. The principle of school attendance being mandatory remains the same and changes made to this policy reflect the DfE regulation and attendance guidance.

Rationale

High attendance rates have been highlighted as a significant factor in maintaining the quality of education provided in schools. Rates of unauthorised absence of pupils of compulsory school age are published. If we are to maintain the continuity of education for our pupils and prepare them for the world of work, we must ensure that absenteeism is kept to an absolute minimum. Furthermore, it is vital that we keep accurate records so that our published truancy rates reflect the low levels of truancy at St Mary's. We must also monitor the punctuality of pupils to ensure good study routines. The key to maintaining existing high standards is the establishment of clear routines with high levels of communication between home and school. St Mary's School believes in the fundamental right of the student to be educated to his or her full potential and to participate fully in the life of the school community.

Aims

- To maintain high levels of pupil attendance
- To improve levels of punctuality
- To improve communication between home and school by working in partnership with parents, students and external agencies.
 - To support any pupils with anxieties since lockdown with their return to school through reorientation visits and where necessary mentoring will be provided and the school will continue to work with external agencies.

Guidelines

a) Guidelines for Parents

- i. School attendance is mandatory. The only exception will be pupils who are unable to attend:
 - In line with public health advice
 - Due to them self-isolating
 - Due to them having Covid symptoms
 - Due to a positive test result themselves
 - Due to being in close contact with someone who has Coronavirus
- ii. All persons who have symptoms of Covid-19, or who live with someone who does, must not attend school and will not be penalised for this. All students, parents and families must follow latest Government advice relating to self-isolation '[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)'.
- iii. Parents must ensure that their children are collected from school immediately if their child develops COVID-19 symptoms onsite.



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- i. Parents will be asked to notify the school in advance of any pre-arranged absence or treatment.
- ii. Parents will be asked to confirm absences by writing a note to the form tutor, and notify the school each day of absence via the absence telephone line 01279 654 901.
- iii. Parents will be informed of the attendance level required for consideration for public examination entry purposes.
- iv. In the event that a student's attendance is below the critical level of 95% without valid reasons, letter 1 will be sent home to highlight concerns.
- v. Should the child's attendance continue to fall and show no sign of improvement, letter 2 will be sent and the parents invited to school to complete a "Parenting Contract", your case will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer at county.
- vi. In the event that irregular attendance continues a Penalty Notice may be issued. A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

b) Guidelines for Tutors (or substitute Tutors)

- i. Tutors to take a written register at the start of each session, where the electronic system is unavailable.
- ii. Registers to be marked each session according to procedures laid down in Staff Handbook.
- iii. Unauthorised absences which are known in advance or accounted for should have the appropriate symbol placed on the register and note entered on SIMS accordingly.
- iv. Unaccounted absences of three days or more (a shorter time for regular absentees) should be reported to Learning Coordinator and noted in the Student Planner.
- v. Unauthorised absence should be reported to the Learning Coordinator and parents must be contacted. Note that unexplained lateness is an unauthorised absence. If a satisfactory explanation is provided, tutors may then authorise the absence in consultation with the Learning Coordinator.
- vi. Lateness of five days or more should be reported to the Learning Coordinator, Assistant Headteacher and noted in the Student Planner.

c) Guidelines for Learning Coordinators

- i. Pupils with high or recurring patterns of non-attendance should be identified and appropriate action should be taken.



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- ii. Registers should be checked weekly to ensure accurate records are being kept. There should be no "N" codes or missing marks.
- iii. Checks should be carried out to ensure verification of absences is being provided and recorded.
- iv. Learning Coordinators should ensure all registers are totalled for each session and on a weekly basis.
- v. Lateness is a form of absence. Sanctions should be in place to deter all lateness, particularly with persistent offenders. Distinction should be made between unavoidable lateness, eg medical appointments, transport delays, and persistent unexplained late arrival during the session, which is a form of unauthorised absence.
- vi. Good attendance should be highlighted and commended.
- vii. Learning Coordinators should liaise regularly with the Attendance Improvement Officer and arrange meetings with form tutors as appropriate.
- viii. Should any student transfer from St Mary's to another school or relocate, information must be passed to the Attendance Officer and Deputy Headteacher within 10 days to ensure information is passed to county as required.

Note: under a service level agreement, the Attendance Improvement Officer will attend St Mary's regularly to meet key pastoral staff.

d) Guidelines for Subject Teachers

- i. Individual attendance records must be kept for every lesson.
- ii. Unexplained absences should be checked against the attendance register and the attendance officer informed.

e) Guidelines for Pupils

- i. Pupils should be encouraged and praised towards good attendance.
- ii. Pupils should be made aware of the correlation between attendance and progress.
- iii. Pupils should be made aware of the implications of good attendance and punctuality on school records and possible future references.
- iv. Pupils should be made aware of the consequences of non-attendance.
- v. Pupils should be made aware of the importance of registering for health and safety purposes.
- vi. Pupils must comply with registration and late arrival procedures.



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- vii. Pupils in Years 7 - 11 must not leave school between 8.15 am and 3.05 pm unless they have a note from home. Permission to leave the premises at lunch time, only in exceptional circumstances, must be given by the Learning Coordinator or Pastoral Manager. Pupils given such permission must sign the absence book in reception on leaving and on their return. Pupils should be made aware that if they truant parents will be informed and they will be required to attend two senior detentions and be placed on an attendance report.
- viii. Sick Notes should be ratified by form tutors or Learning Coordinators.

e) Holiday Requests for Pupils

The Headteacher will not authorise holidays or other term time absences except in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time and evidence is provided to this effect.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- Parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

A leave of absence request form must be completed with evidence to support and submitted to the Headteacher for consideration.

Review

Governor Committee: School Improvement Committee

Date of review: August 2020

Next Review Date: August 2021