

St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Junior School

Pilch Lane

Liverpool

L14 0JG



Attendance Policy

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| Committee to approve/ratify policy | Curriculum & Policies |
| Policy Co-ordinator | R Culley |
| Date of approval/ratification by Committee | September 2023 |
| Date for renewal | September 2024 |
| Signature of the Chair of the Committee | S Boardman |

Mission Statement:

Loving, learning, growing together with Jesus

Legislation and guidance

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority.

This policy meets the requirements of the School Attendance Guidance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measure <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

The Education Act 1996 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

The Education Act 2002 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ukpga/2002/32>

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ukpga/2006/40>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1725/contents/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/contents/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/contents/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/contents/made>

The policy is served in conjunction with our role to safeguard all our pupils. It is therefore important to note, that extremely poor attendance may be classed as 'Educational Neglect' and may result in a referral to Children's Social Care for action

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attendees find school routines and schoolwork easier to cope with.
- Regular attendees find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school.

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 97% (this is our school target).
- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.

- Ensure that every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Support parents to understand their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly.
- Promote and support punctuality.
- Work together with parents, pupils and other agencies to promote regular and punctual school attendance.
- Operate a whole school approach to attendance ensuring that all school staff are responsible for attendance and attendance related matters.

We grade attendance as follows;

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|
| 100% | 97%-99% | 90%-96% | Below 90% (PA) |
| Excellent | Very Good | Need for Improvement | Concern |

Knowsley's Graduated Response Model:



Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at St Margaret Mary's Catholic Junior Schools recognise that attendance is of a high priority.

Role of the School:

- To work with parents in every year group to maintain good attendance and punctuality for each child.
- To follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters on the first day of absence.
- To remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school website and the Home-School agreement.
- To produce full term and half termly attendance letters.
- To publish our attendance rate weekly in the school newsletter.
- To acknowledge and reward good attendance
- To publish each child's attendance rate and punctuality on her/his written school report three times a year.

- To alert parents if there are any concerns regarding a child's attendance and/or punctuality
- To conduct 'Safe and Well' checks on any child absent from school (this may involve a home visit). The purpose of these visits is to provide parents with help, advice and support.
- To arrange 'Team Around the Child' meetings or offer Early help intervention to support families to improve their child's attendance.

Where concerns around a child's attendance continue, to make a referral to the School Attendance Officer, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action.

Specific Responsibilities

Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. The governing body holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The school has a named link governor to monitor attendance.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for making sure the policy is implemented consistently across the school and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

Attendance Officer

The role of the Attendance Officer is:-

- To monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- To report concerns about attendance to the SLT, Pastoral Team and Attendance Team
- To complete statutory DFES Attendance returns and audit requirements
- To analyse attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis with Attendance Team
- To complete statutory Attendance Service audit requirements
- To complete statutory DFES Attendance returns and audits
- To meet with SAS to refer children who are causing Attendance concerns and liaise with Deputy Head Teacher Attendance Officer
- To inform parents/guardians if their child's attendance is causing and liaise with Deputy Head Teacher
- To work constructively with an identified cohort of children to improve attendance/punctuality.
- To develop existing home/school partnerships to achieve aims.
- To initiate contact and meet with parents/guardians in cases of prolonged unexplained absences.
- To work with the School Attendance Service to tackle persistent absence
- To arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- To advise the SLT when to issue a fixed-penalty notice

Attendance Team

The role of the Attendance Team is:-

- To oversee the whole policy
- To monitor attendance on a weekly basis

School Office Staff

The office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Class Teacher

The role of the class teacher is:-

- To ensure the registers are completed accurately and on time
- To discuss attendance and punctuality with the class and parent/guardians on a regular basis.
- To liaise with the Attendance Officer, Learning Mentor and/or SLT over any concerns.
- To encourage a positive attendance and punctuality ethos within the classroom.
- To provide paper register if technical faults prevent taking a register electronically.

School Attendance Service:

The role of the school Attendance Service is to:-

- Support the school-based attendance initiatives and parent/guardian meetings/home visits.
- To regularly update the Attendance Officer on the children they are monitoring.
- School Improvement Service works closely with the school and meets regularly with the Attendance Officer in dealing with children whose attendance/lateness causes concern.

Role of the Parent:

- To phone school (before 9.30am) on the first morning of all absences with the reason for absence, clearly stating when the child will return to school
- To keep in regular contact with school should the absence continue (informing school of any extended period of illness/ongoing health concerns)
- To arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- To provide a note explaining the reason for absence (on the child's return to school after an illness)
- To keep contact information updated.
- To provide medical evidence to help us to authorise the child's absences (a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate evidence)
- To provide medical evidence for diagnosed conditions

Attendance Register

- By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on the register.
- Children should arrive in school each day in time for the school register which is taken at 8.45am.
- The register will be marked at the beginning of the school day (8.50am) and at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- Each child will be marked absent or present by the adult in the classroom
- As soon as registers have been marked electronically, they should be saved enabling the front office to access to them (via SIMs)..
- The front office will mark any child arriving late as [L] or [U].
- Any amendments to the attendance register will be made by the Attendance Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the attendance codes.

Authorised Absence

Some absences may be "authorised absences" eg. if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance. Missing registration for a medical/dental appointment is also counted as an 'authorised absence' (evidence is required) but this will still deduct from your child's attendance figure. In order to achieve their attendance mark, the child needs to be present for attendance.

Occasionally there may be an occasion where there might be a particular problem that causes a child to be absent. In circumstances such as these, the parent should contact school.

Absences are authorised on an individual basis.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are (but are not restricted to):-

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Shopping for new school clothes
- Unapproved Leave of Absence

A letter from a parent/guardian does not automatically authorise a child's absence from school as only the Head teacher can authorise an absence. Reasons given by parents/guardians will be carefully considered before authorising an absence. The parent/guardian may be requested to provide medical evidence in support of the reason for their child's absence.

Continued unauthorised absence (where no satisfactory reason has been provided to the school as to the reason for absence) may leave the school with no option but to pursue an Education Penalty Notice or to make a referral to the School Attendance Service. In some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) if unauthorised absences continue.

Term Time Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Head Teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the Governing Body.

It is our policy that:

- Only exceptional circumstances will be granted for leave of absence.
- Holidays in term time are not classed as an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised.
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence in term time need to fill in an application form (available from the school office) well in advance of the date and clearly state the reason for the absence (ie the exceptional circumstance). The request will be considered by the attendance officer/ Headteacher the parent will be advised of the decision.
- If a Term Time Leave of Absence form is not completed and no contact can be made with the parents/carers regarding the child's whereabouts and/or safety, the pupil will, after ten days, be referred to the Authority as a Missing Pupil (see section on Children Missing Education).
- If the school does not agree to a request for leave of absence and the child is subsequently absent on the requested dates, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Throughout the school year any pupil with **10 Sessions of absence (5 School days)** may be issued with an Education Penalty Notice Warning, and the parent may receive an Education Penalty Notice issued by the Knowsley School Attendance Service *

In respect of Looked After Children, the local authority will not make a request for a child/young person to take leave of absence during term time.

***Please refer to Appendix 2 for details of Penalty Notices and Fine**

Rewarding good attendance

Good attendance is rewarded in the following ways:

- Weekly class raffle (for all pupils achieving 100% attendance that week).
- Weekly achievement assembly where the class with the highest attendance is announced and rewarded.
- Class trophies
- Attendance Certificates (Bronze/Silver/Gold for one/two/three terms of 100% attendance respectively)
- Termly raffles (for pupils' whose attendance is 97%+)- £10/£20/£50 voucher for the winner of the Autumn/Spring/Summer term respectively (one per year group)
- Termly 100% attendance raffle (£10 for
- Voucher for the most improved attender each team.

Punctuality

Good punctuality is very important as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or to organise school work for the rest of the day. Persistent lateness has a detrimental effect on a child's education.

| S/he is only missing just... | that equals... | which is... | and over 13 years of schooling that is |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 10 minutes per day | 50 minutes a week | Nearly 1.5 weeks per year | Nearly half a year |
| 20 minutes per day | 1 hour and 40 minutes per week | Over 2.5 weeks per year | Nearly 1 year |
| Half an hour per day | Half a day per week | 4 weeks per year | Nearly 1 and a half years |
| 1 hour per day | 1 day per week | 8 weeks per year | Over 2 and a half years |

If a child misses the start of the day, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. We take the view that there are no late children, only late parents.

School Procedures

- The school gates open at 8.30am to allow children onto the school premises.
- Children go straight to their classroom as they arrive where they will be supervised until Morning Registration.
- Morning registration is at 8.45am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate before 8.45am
- The school gate will close promptly at 8.45am
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that, if their child arrives late to school, they enter the school via the main entrance and are marked into the late register (providing a reason for lateness).

Responding To Persistent Poor Punctuality:

- A child who arrives later than **8.45am** is classified as late. The register closes at **9am** in line with DFE guidance.
- Any child who arrives 30 minutes after close of registration will receive a 'late after close of registration' mark which deducts from their attendance and is classed as an unauthorised absence.
- Through analysis of the absence reports the Attendance Officer will identify those children whose punctuality is causing a concern.
- As above a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian to alert them of the number of occasions their child has been late in school during a half term. Once again, an acknowledgement of receiving this letter is required and parents/guardians are given the opportunity to meet with the Attendance Officer and/or Deputy Head Teacher/ Learning Mentor, to discuss any problems that may be affecting their child arriving in school on time.
- Some children may be given a target card to focus their attention to arriving in school on time.
- As above if the problem persists with no signs of improvement School Attendance Service will be notified.

Points of Contact in School

- Attendance Officer
- Deputy Headteacher
- Learning Mentor
- Class Teacher
- Office Staff

Monitoring and Review

- The school Attendance Officer monitors pupils' attendance on a daily basis.
- Using the information from SIMs and the class teacher's observations, the Attendance Officer will identify children whose attendance falls below the expected level
- At the weekly Attendance Team meeting, the Attendance Team discusses those pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern and a decision is made as to how best to support those pupils.
- Cases will be identified for School Attendance Service and referred for intervention
- St Margaret Mary's Catholic Junior school holds an Attendance Panel and parents of children with poor attendance and/or punctuality will be invited to attend.
- This policy is reviewed every three years by the headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is *Autumn Term 2024*
- Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

Links to other policies

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

Child protection & Safeguarding

Children Missing in Education

APPENDIX 1

Register Codes

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| O | Unauthorised absence |
| C | Other authorised absence |
| I | Illness (not a doctor or dental appointment) |
| M | Medical or dental appointment |
| B | Educated off site |
| E | Excluded |
| H | Holiday agreed |
| V | Educational visit |
| U | Late after close of register. |
| T | Traveller absence |
| F | Extended holidays (agreed) |
| J | Interview |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| G | Family holiday not agreed |
| L | Late before close of register |
| R | Religious observance |
| D | Dual registration (attending other establishment) |

APPENDIX 2

Penalty Warning and Fines:

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

- School should initially issue a warning letter to parents on school headed paper. The letter should refer to recent/current unauthorised absence and warn of a likelihood of an Education Penalty Notice if the threshold of **10 sessions (5 days)** is reached within a ten week period, this may span more than one term. ***In law a parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered.***
- In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after registration has closed and has lost **10 unauthorised** late sessions within a period of no more than 10 weeks.
- A combination of reasons which amounts to **10 sessions** lost to unauthorised absence within a period of no more than 10 weeks.
- If leave of absence has not been requested, a warning letter and fine may be issued.
- All Penalty Notices will be served by first class post which will satisfy evidential requirements and will meet Health, Safety and information security requirements.
- A separate Penalty Notice may in the case of a leave of absence be addressed to each parent and be sent to the recipient at his/her usual or last known address.
- Penalty Notices will involve the recipient paying a fine of £120 within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.
- **Penalty Notice not paid in full. After which the authority has a statutory duty to consider instigating legal proceedings. If proven, this can result in a range of fine up to £2500 and/or a range of disposals such as parents order or community sentences.**
- Where an unauthorised absence has been dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice and it has been paid, it is not possible for a parent to be prosecuted for the same period of unauthorised absence.

APPENDIX 3

Children Missing in Education

When school has not been able to make contact with a parent for a period of ten days, the child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations under Safeguarding Procedures, which will include liaising with the School Attendance Service, Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to track and locate your child.

APPENDIX 4

Home Education

Parents may decide to educate their child from home. Schools must be informed of this intention in writing and this information will be passed to the 'School Attendance Service' and other relevant professionals.

If parents take this decision, they become responsible for providing a full and complete education and may be subject to visits from the Local Authority to check on the standard of education they are providing

APPENDIX 5

Medical Conditions

- Parents are requested to inform school about any ongoing medical conditions.
- School work closely with parents, school nurses and other medical professionals to support children with ongoing medical conditions.

Public Health England

- Public Health England provides schools with information about how long children will need to be absent from school with specific health conditions. Parents are welcome to contact the school office and ask for Public Health advice.

APPENDIX 6

Religious observances

- The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for a day of religious observance.

APPENDIX 7

Modelling, Sport and Acting Performances

Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the Local Authority. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the Local Authority. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements

The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school for a lengthy period of time to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. These arrangements will be approved by the Local Authority who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring that these arrangements are carried out. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the Local Authority issuing the licence.

- Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the Local Authority decides to grant the application, the Local Authority will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.
- Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- The headteacher will not authorise leave of absence requests where a child's attendance falls below 97%.
- Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

APPENDIX 8

Reintegration of a pupil following a prolonged period of absence:

- If a child has been absent from school for a prolonged period of time, their return to school needs to be planned and dealt with sensitively and considerately. Mrs Culley Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Perry Learning Mentor and class teacher will work closely together to decide on the nature and amount of support that is needed, which will depend on the child and the circumstances. Any problems will be reported to the Management Team as soon as possible.
- Where a child is temporarily excluded, this will be dealt with as an authorised absence. While the pupil remains on the school register the school will recognise its responsibilities and set the relevant work for the excluded. On returning to school the child and parent/guardian will report to the Head Teacher to discuss targets and expectations.

APPENDIX 8



St Margaret Mary's Catholic Junior School

Loving, learning, growing together with Jesus

Attendance Escalation Procedure

2023-2024

