

# St. Mary and St. John Catholic Primary School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY



'In the Light of Jesus, we Learn to Shine'

Reviewed and Ratified on: September 24

Signed(Chair of Governors): A Whitney

# St Mary and St John RC Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### 1. RATIONALE

PARENTS HAVE A LEGAL DUTY TO ENSURE THEIR CHILD ATTENDS SCHOOL REGULARLY.

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT PARENTS INFORM THE SCHOOL OF ANY ABSENCE AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY SO THE SCHOOL CAN ASCERTAIN THAT NOTHING HAS HAPPENED TO THE CHILD. SCHOOL WILL TRY TO CONTACT PARENTS AS SOON AS THE ABSENCE IS NOTED IF THERE IS NO PRIOR EXPLANATION GIVEN.

- 1.1 Our school provides a calm, welcoming, caring environment, where all our pupils feel cared for, secure and are keen to learn.
- 1.2 The Governors and Staff want all pupils to receive a full-time education, allowing each pupil to reach his/her potential.
- 1.3 Our school understands the importance of having excellent attendance and its impact on achievement. We will strive to sustain our high attendance figures. The Attendance Policy <https://www.saintmaryandjohn.wigan.sch.uk/policies/> has been written with reference to DFE Working together to improve school attendance Guidance:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1099677/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
- 1.4 Research suggests that children taken out of school may never catch up with the learning they have missed and this may affect test results and can be a significant impact in the run up to end of year examinations. Children who struggle with Literacy and Numeracy may find it even harder to cope on their return. Younger children may find it more difficult to renew friendships with classmates.
- 1.5 We work with pupils and their families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and punctually. (Link to parent guidance: [DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance))

We do this by:

Reminding parents regularly that they are responsible for getting their child/children to school regularly and on time

Making parents aware that pupils with poor attendance are less likely to do well in school.  
(Pupils missing 9.5 days or more do less well than others and this equates to 95% attendance or less which is known to compromise pupil attainment)

Inform parents at parents' meetings about their child's current attendance figure through our 'Behaviour and Attitudes' pupil files report which is colour coded as follows:

ATTENDANCE		PUNCTUALITY - LATES	
98.1% to 100%	Excellent attendance	0 late sessions	Excellent
95.1% to 98%	Good attendance	1-5 late sessions	Good
90% to 95%	Acceptable attendance but may fall into persistent absence category and will be monitored.	6-9 late sessions	Acceptable - but will need to be monitored
Below 90%	Unacceptable attendance.	10 + late sessions	Unacceptable

Attendance below 90% to be recorded as a **persistent absentee** and to be closely monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Authority Link Worker (or Attendance Enforcement officer).

If attendance doesn't improve this is likely to result in a formal referral to the Local Authority for further investigation or the Education Penalty Notice Warning system will be carried out. (see section 9)

Carrying out regular monitoring of absence and issuing support letters to parents where concerns arise.

- 1.6 We aim to ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- 1.7 All our stakeholders- governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- 1.8 We strive to keep up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- 1.9 We will identify low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and work with parents to provide support and guidance.
- 1.10 We will work with external agencies in order to address barriers to attendance.

If your child falls below 90% attendance, they will come under a Persistent Absence process and will be monitored by the Local Authority should attendance not improve. The Local Authority collate whole school and **individual pupil** data on attendance and persistent attendance and monitor attendance across the schools.

## 2 THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL

- 2.1 Parents of children of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that they receive full time education. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring their children attend and stay at school.

- 2.2 It is the school's responsibility to support good attendance and to offer support where problems may lead to non-attendance.
- 2.3 Our Home-School Agreement reflects our belief that pupils must attend regularly and punctually so that they can do their best.
- 2.4 The school's 'open door' policy encourages parents to discuss any difficulties with attendance with class teachers, senior leaders or the Head Teacher.
- 2.5 Parents must make sure that children arrive at school by 8.50am ready to learn.
- 2.6 At the start of an absence, parents are required to contact school and report the reason for absence. This is recorded via the 'contact parents' system. School will continue to contact parents where no reason is provided until an explanation is given.
- 2.7 If no explanation is given for an absence which continues for 2 days, a home visit will be completed a member of school staff.

### **3. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

There are several ways in which information about Attendance is shared with parents:

- 3.1 School Prospectus: this has information regarding the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- 3.2 Home-School Agreement: this underlines the importance of regular attendance and makes it clear that this is the shared responsibility of school, home and (where appropriate) the child.
- 3.3 Newsletters & Information Sheets: these are sent home on a regular basis to remind parents of the school day arrangements (see Appendix 2) and their responsibilities and the impact of poor attendance.
- 3.4 Parents are informed of the procedures followed by Wigan schools relating to requests for absence (other than sickness) in term time.
- 3.5 Attendance data is held electronically in school. If parents wish to view this information they can request so by contacting the office.
- 3.6 School Website: <https://stmary-and-stjohncatholic-primarieschool.secure-primarysite.net/policies/>

### **4 SCHOOL REGISTRATION**

- 4.1 Attendance is recorded electronically using the Arbor system. This facilitates the easy analysis of attendance data, highlighting patterns of lateness or absence which would be reported to parents if necessary.
- 4.2 The register closes at 8.50am. Any child arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late. All late arrivals must report to the main office. Parents must contact school via the app, email, or phone to report general absence as

soon as possible on the first day of absence. Any personal absence information should be shared with the class teacher. Senior leaders should be informed where more serious absences arise.

Any child who arrives after 9.20am and before the end of the morning session will be recorded as a (U)\*. A child not arriving in the morning will be marked as (O)\* unless an alternative explanation has been given such as illness (I)\*. The office will also phone the home number and check the answer phone to see if another explanation can be given.

\*The register is recorded as follows:

U- unauthorised, late for session

O- unauthorised, out for whole session

I - illness (following written confirmation for an authorised absence)

M - medical/dentist

C - other authorised absence

G - unauthorised holiday

H - holiday

- 4.3 Letters/doctors notes/appointment details explaining absences are kept on file as part of the attendance records and are kept for the legally required period.
- 4.4 Punctuality is essential to ensure that the start of the teaching day is uninterrupted and that there is optimum teaching and learning time for all pupils.

## 5 HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

- 5.1 Holidays in term time, or Leave of Absence, can affect a school's otherwise good attendance record by on average 2 percentage points in any one year.
- 5.2 Legislation says that parents are entitled to request leave but that it is the school that approves that request. At the heart of a common protocol adopted by Wigan schools, is the presumption of not authorising requests in term time, except in 'special circumstances' and only in 'exceptional circumstances' for extended leave.
- 5.3 At our school, term time holidays and extended leave are not allowed as they are not in the best interests of pupils.
- 5.4 Information for parents/carers clarifying their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and highlighting the impact of avoidable absences during term time will be made available via the policy, Home- School Agreement, parents' evenings and induction meetings.

5.5 In cases of exceptional or special circumstances, parents/carers must apply to the Head Teacher in good time (Local Authority defines this as 6 weeks in advance) for permission to take their children out of school during term time. Where unforeseen circumstances occur (e.g. bereavement) parents/carers are still required to contact the school to request leave of absence. Our school will operate a formal process of application and agreement/contract, in all cases. In addition the number and frequency of absences taken for this purpose will be recorded throughout the pupil's school career.

5.6 As part of the application process parents/carers will be expected to demonstrate a willingness to make arrangements that cause least disruption to their child's learning. This might involve:

- Wrapping days of absence around existing school holiday periods to minimise time out of school
- Weighing the benefits to the family against detriment to educational process
- Avoiding entirely periods of public examinations and National Curriculum Assessments

5.7 There are no circumstances when an application for a term time holiday will be granted:

- Within transition periods e.g. entry in Reception Class, transition from Primary to Secondary
- Immediately before and during National Curriculum Assessments
- When the pupil's attendance record is already at or below 95% or will fall to below that level if the leave is granted.
- If the pupil already has unauthorised absences in the current academic year.

5.8 The Head Teacher and Governing Body may, on occasion, make a judgement that there are genuine and acceptable circumstances pertaining to a particular application to take a pupil out of school in term time. The following general issues will be considered at such times:

- Age of the pupil
- Time of the school year
- Motive and purpose of the request and potential benefits to the pupil
- Duration and impact on continuity of learning
- Circumstances of family requesting time out of school
- Rarity or otherwise of this event in the pupils' career to date
- Overall attendance pattern

- Proof from parent/carer of unavoidable circumstances e.g. parent/carer's leave is during a fixed workplace closedown or an inflexible leave allocation in the parent/carer's profession.

## **6 EXTENDED LEAVE**

- 6.1 In exceptional circumstances where a parent/carer requests extended leave totalling more than 10 days per school year each case must be carefully assessed on its merits. Whilst the policy is to discourage any leave in term time, there are circumstances in which the Head Teacher and Governing Body might consider such applications.
- 6.2 If such applications are agreed failure to return to school by the agreed date, without acceptable cause, will jeopardise the pupil's place at the school. An Absence Request Form stating the agreed date of the pupil's return to school must be agreed and signed by the Head Teacher and parent/carer.
- 6.3 Where a pupil has been granted 10 or more day's leave and fails to return by the agreed date a further period of 10 days is allowed for the school and Local Authority to investigate the circumstances before de-registration is considered. This 10-day period of investigation is recorded as unauthorised absence.
- 6.4 If a pupil is unavoidably detained from returning to school by the agreed date the parent/carer must endeavour to contact school and request an additional period of leave. Such cases will be considered on an individual basis.

## **7 PUPILS TAKING HOLIDAY/EXTENDED LEAVE WITHOUT PERMISSION**

- 7.1 Where a parent/carer takes a pupil out of school in term time, a period of unauthorised absence is immediately created.
- 7.2 The Head Teacher will write to the family advising them that the absence is unauthorised and that there is a risk of the child losing his/her place at the school. The school may also notify the Local Authority/Attendance Enforcement Team and may consider a Penalty Notice being issued under the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- 7.3 Failure to return to school within 20 school days places the pupil at risk of losing his/her place at the school.

## **8 TAKING PUPILS OFF THE SCHOOL ROLL**

- Where a pupil fails to return by the agreed date from an absence in term time/extended leave, the school and Local Authority will make every effort to contact the family and establish the circumstances.

- The school will always inform the Local Authority in advance of a possible case of deregistration as it must be agreed that every effort to locate the pupil has failed.
- Where there is no acceptable cause and the school has followed procedures by informing the family in writing of the possible consequences of non-return, then that pupil will be taken off the school roll after the 10-day investigation period.
- The school will inform the Local Authority of this and will trigger enquiries about the pupil's future schooling arrangements.

## **9 THE LOCAL AUTHORITY REFERRAL SERVICE**

The school works closely with the Local Authority to maintain good attendance. The staff are asked to identify any concerns regarding lateness or absence for particular children. Class registers are inspected, attendance is monitored half-termly.

- Parents/carers of pupils(s) giving new concerns (regular absence/lateness) will receive a letter(following half-termly analysis) to inform them about concerns and support will be offered.
- It will be expected that attendance the following term improves. If this is not the case, a further letter will be sent out and the Senior Leadership Team or Local Authority Link Worker may advise to make a formal referral. The Local Authority Link Worker/Attendance Enforcement Officer may make a home visit to make parents/carers aware of how seriously the school views continued absences. This may then result in legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act.

### **Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School attendance in Wigan**

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school. If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week rolling period:

- 20 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a period of 10 weeks.
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

You could receive a Penalty Notice of £80 which will increase to £160 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

## **10 STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING/REWARDING EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE**

10.1 We aim to ensure good attendance (96%+) and punctuality is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.

10.2 We aim to achieve, sustain and reward high levels of attendance and punctuality.

We do this by:

- Holding celebration assemblies which include celebration of individual and class group attendance awards as required.
- Good class attendance is regularly promoted and termly class attendance is reported in Newsletters and an annual letter to parents (Appendix 1)
- Parent/ pupil meetings provide an opportunity to praise and recognise excellent attendance or to share concerns and discuss barriers to learning.
- Class staff regularly inform the SLT of any concerns and reoccurring issues. Information is also shared and discussed at pupil progress meetings.
- Engaging 'start of day' (SODA) activities are used by the staff to motivate a prompt and productive start of the day, the pupils enjoy the activities which encourage them to arrive punctually.
- The Arbor system enables staff to monitor daily, weekly and regular attendance enabling issues to be identified early and acted upon where necessary.

Our policy aims to support and maintain excellent attendance with the continued support from our school families.



# St. Mary & St. John Catholic Primary School

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Website: [www.stmaryandjohn.catholicprimary.co.uk](http://www.stmaryandjohn.catholicprimary.co.uk)

## Appendix 1

Headteacher: Mrs L Vose BA QTS

Dear parents,

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Please read the following information regarding the process that Wigan schools follow in the event of non-attendance. Please also refer to the School Attendance Policy which can be found on the website:

### Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School Attendance in Wigan Schools

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school. If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week rolling period:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a period of 10 school weeks
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

You could receive a Penalty Notice of £80 which will increase to £160 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your school and ask for support.

All holiday requests (whether 1 day/1 week etc) will continue to be unauthorised during term time and only in very exceptional circumstances with supporting documents will any absence request be considered as authorised.

Please remember that the reasons behind having strict attendance procedures in schools are to safeguard children and to provide our pupils with the best possible chance of a full education where they can reach their full potential.

The local authority rarely if ever get in contact with our school regarding penalty notices and we would hope this will continue.

We are really proud of our high and sustained attendance figures which of course contribute to the excellent school results we have achieved overtime for our pupils.

We are lucky that our parents understand and avoid term time holidays, supporting the best outcomes for our pupils and embracing the vision and ethos of our school family.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Vose  
Headteacher

## **School Day Arrangements from September 2024**

### **Start of the school day**

The school gates will open from 8.40am and the school day will start at 8.45am.

The three entry points will remain in place:

- Infants onto the infant playground
- Siblings through the front entrance of school
- Juniors through the junior entry gate
- The junior gates will be open from 8.40am for **all** juniors (The gates are closed at 8.50am)

The school day will start at 8.45am for all pupils. Registration will close at 8.50am.

### **End of the school day**

All classes will finish the day at 3.15pm and the three exit points are as follows:

- Infants from the infant playground
- Juniors from the junior playground
- Sibling parents, with children in both Key Stages, are to collect infant pupils first then walk round to the junior playground.

Please note the school day will start at 8.45am and your child is expected to be ready in class to start learning by 8.50am. Any pupils that arrive after 8.50am will be marked as late. All classes take part in SODA (Start of the Day) activities and so it is vital that your child is in school for this time.

## Attendance Matters

Dear Parent /Carer

At St Mary and St John Primary school we work hard to ensure that every one of our children reaches their full potential with your support. We have enclosed a copy of your child's attendance record for this year so far. The table below explains their attendance.

CATEGORY	ATTENDANCE	EXPLANATION
	90% or Below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your child's attendance is a concern.</li><li>• DfE class as persistent absence</li><li>• Your child may have a medical condition school are aware of.</li><li>• Please come in and talk to us about how we can help each other raise your child's attendance.</li></ul>
	90.1% - 95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your child's attendance is being closely monitored.</li><li>• You help to take steps to reduce further absence.</li></ul>
	95.1% - 98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your child's attendance is very good.</li><li>• You are striving to reach excellent attendance.</li></ul>
	98.1% -100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Well done! Your Child's attendance is excellent. We aim for all students' attendance to fall into this category</li><li>• Your child's attendance is celebrated and rewarded.</li></ul>

We aware that occasionally it may be necessary for children to be absent from school but we ask for your support in ensuring your child's regular attendance. In order for your child to achieve an expected attendance percentage of 97% they should have no more than 6 days absence in any school year.

Please do not hesitate to contact school if you wish for any further support. This letter is to inform every parent about their child's attendance and I would encourage you to come and discuss any worries you or your child may have about this.

Yours Sincerely,  
Mr Atherton  
Attendance Officer

## Attendance Codes – September 2024

<b>Attending the school</b>	
/\	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
<b>Absent – Leave of absence</b>	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes</b>	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure