



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Approved	27 th November 2024	Review period	Annual
Next Review	November 2025		



SS MARY & JOHN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our Mission Statement

Working together with God to achieve a better future for everyone.

*"Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great."
(Lk. 16v10)*

At SS Mary & John Catholic Primary School we take a committed and professional approach to the safety, welfare and happiness of the children in our care. As a Catholic school we regard every individual as unique and special in God's family. It is important for all children to regularly attend school on time irrespective of gender, religion, cultural background and ability, to ensure they make the best of their God-given talents and skills.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy Statement

To ensure our children derive maximum benefit from the educational opportunities available to them, we believe it is imperative for children to attend school regularly and punctually. This attendance policy identifies the approach of SS Mary & John Catholic School to promote and improve attendance and punctuality; ultimately raising standards.

We believe that attendance and punctuality are a shared responsibility between the school, the parents/carers and the pupils themselves, supported by the Local Authority and MAC as necessary. It is essential that parents/carers support their children in attending and receiving what they need from school. As a school, we value the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance.

We have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across our school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all of our pupils including their safeguarding and welfare.

Senior Attendance Champion - Mrs L Stephens
Attendance Officer - Mrs C Scally

Rationale

We believe regular attendance and punctuality is important:

- to foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community: teachers, parents/carers and pupils;
- as absenteeism leads to underachievement;
- so that lessons can begin on time without interruptions which helps everyone to learn.

Aims

- to communicate to parents the high priority placed upon good attendance and punctuality;
- to ensure that all children and parents understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality;
- to achieve 98%+ attendance and 100% attendance.

Attendance

The gates to both Junior and Infant Sites are opened at 8.34 am for children to make their way to their classroom ready for registration at 8.44 am.

A daily check is made on attendance by school staff in the following way:

- Parents/carers must inform the school on the first day when a child is absent, giving the reason.
- Parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence if they have not informed the school.
- Absence codes are entered throughout the week for any children where reasons have been given
- Any child for whom an acceptable reason for absence has not been supplied will be marked unauthorised.

This helps to identify any unauthorised absences along with patterns and trends in any absences.

Communicating Absences

Parents are required to inform the school by a telephone call before 9.30 am each day or give written correspondence explaining the reason for their child's absence. Parents can leave a message on the school answer phone or email the school office on enquiry@stmryjon.net. The school operates a 'first day response' initiative. In the event of a child being absent and no explanation received by a telephone call or written correspondence, the office will contact parents by telephone to ascertain the reason for the child's absence. Where an explanation is not obtained then further telephone contact is made from the school and if we are unable to get a response a home visit will take place.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents should inform the school in advance and show the letter or appointment card as evidence. It is not usually necessary for whole days to be taken for appointments - so children should attend for the rest of the day where possible.

Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

Attendance Percentages

Government research has shown that children's attendance relates directly to their achievements. Any attendance that is below 95% is a cause for concern. The school ask that all parents/carers aim for 100% attendance. The school consider attendance in the following way:

100%	Excellent
99%	Very Good
96% - 98%	Good
95%	Satisfactory
Below 95%	Cause for concern

The Strategic Approach

SS Mary and John's Catholic Primary School adopts the [5 Foundations of Effective Attendance](#) Practice framework, this is modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare. The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all children can attend school and thrive. The approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with children, and parents, prior to escalation. The staged approach we follow ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internal (in-school) and external (external agencies).

Aims of the 5 Foundations strategy

- Increase school Attendance and reduce Persistent Absence to meet set targets.
- Ensure Attendance is well-managed within the school, with the appropriate level of resources allocated.
- Enable the school to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the [2022 DFE attendance paper](#).

Objectives

- create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child aims for excellent attendance.
- make attendance and punctuality a priority.
- set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels.
- embed the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality.
- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism.
- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, children and develop mutual cooperation between home and the school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues including special educational needs and/or disabilities, providing them with additional support.
- Demonstrate, using rewards, that the school recognises good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.



5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice

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The framework allows the school to understand the whole school approach to supporting and improving attendance, this is completely aligned to our CORE SCHOOL VALUES. We create welcoming environments to allow all children to gain a sense of belonging and ultimately achieve academically through regular school attendance.

The school policy is translated into practise through the processes and systems we follow. The escalated approach supports children at each stage, parents who do not engage with support understand why, at times, we must follow this process.

All staff receive attendance training to support the whole school approach, they understand their role in improving attendance. Certain staff are identified to engage in specialist training to continue to support families and children who work with external partners.

We use data information to support children as this allows us to understand the groups, and individuals, who require specific programmes of intervention. Reviewing each programme allows us to understand the effectiveness of support and change what is not working.

Finally, we train and support all staff to understand the 'root cause' of concerns. Staff use the wider curriculum to allow all children to feel valued and accept themselves. We celebrate attendance success and ensure children returning from long absence receive a planned transition.

The main aim of the framework is to ensure the school promotes a culture of good attendance and celebrates success. Ultimately, the framework will ensure there is a culture of feeling safe and school being a place where children want to be.

Positive health and emotional well-being are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice model promotes, and supports, a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring SEMH support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all children.

Each Foundation is supported by 5 Key Performance Indicators, these are used to ensure the school can embed the Foundations framework and understand the strategic direction regarding attendance improvement. Each year the school will use the 5 Foundations self-assessment tool to understand what works well and identify what we need to do even better. We then follow the 5 Foundations school improvement process to implement the attendance plan and ultimately improve the lives of children and families we work with.



Foundation 1
Whole School Thinking
Culture & Climate

The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.



Foundation 2
Supportive Policies,
Systems and Processes

The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.



Foundation 3
Professional Learning
Staff Development

The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External

partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.



Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.



Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

DFE: Working Together To Improve Attendance 2022.

From September 2022 the [DFE: Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) paper has replaced all previous guidance on school attendance except for statutory guidance for parental responsibility measures. The Secretary of State has committed to it becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows (this will be no sooner than September 2023).

The table below identifies how the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice will underpin the DFE 2022 paper.

DFE Summary of Expectations	 Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate	 Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes	 Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development	 Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention	 Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management
Develop a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have a school attendance policy		✓			
Have day-to-day processes to follow up absence	✓	✓	✓		
Monitor and analyse data to identify those that need support		✓	✓	✓	
Engage with families, understand barriers to attendance and work together to remove them	✓			✓	✓
Provide additional support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND			✓	✓	✓
Share information and work collaboratively with others	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A new focus on persistent and severe absence		✓	✓	✓	✓
Find out what the DFE expects from other stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	

Leave during Term Time

The Government have made it law that holidays taken during school time cannot be authorised. This means that anyone who then takes their holidays during term time may be subject to a fixed penalty notice. Holidays during term time have a detrimental effect on education. There is no entitlement to leave. Penalty notices may be issued to those families who do not abide by the school's decision to deny leave.

Time off school is not a right. In exceptional circumstances, head teachers can allow a small amount of time out of school.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendship with peers and support from staff can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you believe there is an exceptional and urgent reason for your child to take leave during term time, parents/carers will need to complete a Term Time Leave Request form available from the school office. It is the Head Teacher who will then make a decision on whether or not the leave can be authorised. For example:

- 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).

Special or exceptional circumstances do NOT include:

- availability of cheaper holidays;
- availability of desired accommodation;

- poor weather in school holidays;
- overlap with the beginning or the end of term.

Attendance Rewards

Attendance and punctuality is promoted daily in class and through assemblies. To raise the profile of good attendance and highlight its importance, classes with the best attendance are mentioned in our weekly newsletters and will be given extra time play time.

Individual certificates are presented throughout the year to pupils who have achieved 100% attendance half termly, termly and the whole school year.

Attendance is reported to the Governors termly in the Head Teacher's Report.

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important. Children who are late cause disruption to the staff and other children in the class. More importantly, it is embarrassing for the child and is disruptive to their education.

The gates to both Junior and Infant Sites are opened at 8.34 am for children to make their way to their classroom ready for registration at 8.44 am. The gates are locked at 8.44 am and children who arrive after that time need to be taken to the school office by their parents/carers where a log of the time of arrival and reason for lateness will be recorded on the School's Management Information System (MIS). Punctuality is monitored and parents are contacted where it is of concern. Any arrival after the registers close at 9.14 am is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Punctuality at the end of the day is equally important and children should be collected on time. Waiting and not knowing why parents/carers are late can cause anxiety for children especially when they see that every member of the class has been collected on time and has gone home. Staff also have meetings and training after school which impacts on availability to look after children who have not been collected on time.

Birmingham City Council Support First

SS Mary & John Catholic Primary School work with Birmingham City Council Education Legal Intervention Team to help resolve attendance issues.

For children with an attendance of less than 95% an individual attendance report is generated and sent with a letter from the Head Teacher to the parents/carers. This letter offers the parents/carers the option of an Early Help Assessment should they be experiencing problems affecting their child's attendance.

If attendance does not improve or if attendance is below 90%, a letter is sent to the parents/carers inviting them to an informal meeting with the Attendance Lead to discuss strategies for improvement. If appropriate, the school may refer parents/carers to the appropriate agencies for further advice, support or actions.

If there is still no improvement in attendance and parents/carers have refused attempts by the school to engage, parents/carers will be invited to a Formal Attendance Meeting (FAM) with the Attendance Lead. This meeting gives parents/carers an opportunity to discuss any matters of concern and again offer assistance and support via an Early Help Assessment. Failure to attend this meeting and further unauthorised absence can result in (as set out in the Education Regulations 2024):

- Penalty notices – a penalty of £80 or £160 depending on how soon payment is made. Applicable to both parents.
- Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence.
- Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence.

Deletion of pupil from school roll

A pupil is deleted from the school roll if s/he is registered as a pupil of another school or if an absence exceeds the authorised period given for an Extended Leave of Absence. The school will **NOT** remove a pupil from roll where there is no known destination without consultation with Education Welfare Services/Education Legal Intervention Team.

Children 'Children Missing from Education' (Formerly 'Left School No Trace')

If the school believes a child has left SS Mary and John's Catholic Primary School but there is no record of them being taken on roll at another school, then the school would refer to the Local Authority 'Children Missing from Education' team for advice and support. School would then follow the current guidelines and procedures.

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7690/cme_policy_final_september_2021.pdf

If the school is concerned about the child's safety or well-being, a Designated Safeguarding Leader will contact CASS immediately and an Early Help Request Referral will be made.

Children's Advisory Support Service (CASS) on 0121 303 1888

Monitoring & Evaluation

Attendance Data will be evaluated on a regular basis. The impact of communication with parents – including letters sent home and discussion on patterns of attendance and punctuality – are evaluated termly by the SLT, with the assistance of the Office Staff in the light of data collated. The SLT will evaluate the effectiveness of attendance and punctuality following intervention and the impact this appears to have upon improving attendance and punctuality.

This policy will be reviewed annually.