



Attendance Policy

Mission Statement:

'In St Margaret Mary's School

we welcome everyone into our community

in order to live, love and learn

together in the light and example of the life of Christ.'

'In St Margaret Mary School we value the wellbeing of all Stakeholders.'

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

School: St Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary School

Senior Attendance Champion: Mrs J Logue

Policy Review Date: July 2027

1. Policy Statement

At St Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that education is a developmental process which builds on each pupil's **"previous best."** Regular and punctual attendance is essential in ensuring that pupils have the best possible opportunity to achieve, make progress and participate fully in school life.

Education should, wherever possible, be continuous and uninterrupted. The school is committed to providing a happy, safe, secure, well-ordered and well-maintained environment in which all pupils can learn effectively and thrive.

This policy aims to:

- promote excellent attendance and punctuality;
- encourage, support and improve attendance for all pupils;
- identify and address barriers to regular attendance at an early stage;
- ensure that attendance concerns are dealt with consistently and fairly;
- safeguard the welfare of all pupils;
- work collaboratively with parents and carers and, where appropriate, external agencies.

Good attendance is a shared responsibility between pupils, parents and carers, school staff, governors and external agencies.

All staff are expected to act as positive role models by being punctual, prepared and consistent in their approach to attendance.

The school follows the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**.

2. School Hours, Registration and Punctuality

Accurate attendance registration is essential for both educational and safeguarding purposes.

Morning session

- The school gates open at **8:30am**.
- The morning registration period begins at **8:30am**.
- Gates close at **8:45am**.
- Registers close at **8:45am**.

Afternoon session

- Afternoon registers open at **1:25pm**.
- Afternoon registers close at **1:30pm**.

Pupils arriving after the gates have closed must report to the school office.

The school will maintain an accurate daily record of pupils who arrive after the gates have closed. The office team will record the pupil's arrival time and ensure that the appropriate attendance code is entered on the school's attendance system.

Teachers are responsible for completing registers accurately and promptly. Registers are collected by the office team following registration.

Attendance and absence codes are recorded in accordance with the current DfE requirements.

3. Managing Lateness and Punctuality

Punctuality is closely monitored because arriving late can result in pupils missing important teaching, learning, routines and opportunities to settle into the school day.

The school will:

- monitor lateness daily;
- identify pupils who are regularly late;
- communicate concerns to parents and carers weekly;
- provide support where there are barriers affecting punctuality;
- monitor patterns of lateness over time.

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Where a pupil is late on more than two occasions in one week, the Headteacher may write formally to parents/carers to raise the concern and encourage improvement.

Attendance and punctuality data will be reviewed regularly. A half-termly attendance and punctuality letter will be sent to parents/carers where appropriate, outlining the number of occasions on which their child has been late.

Persistent lateness will be addressed through the school's attendance support procedures.

4. Absence Reporting and Procedures

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

Reporting an absence

Parents/carers should contact the school on each day of absence, explaining the reason why their child is unable to attend.

Where a pupil is absent and the school has not received an explanation, the school will make contact with the parent/carer.

Unexplained absences will be followed up promptly. Where necessary, the school may make further enquiries or involve appropriate external agencies in accordance with safeguarding and attendance procedures.

All attendance-related communication will be appropriately recorded.

Medical absence

Where a child is unwell, parents/carers should provide the school with appropriate information about the reason for absence.

The school may request supporting medical evidence where this is appropriate, particularly where there are ongoing or complex health needs, repeated patterns of absence or concerns regarding the reason for absence.

The school will not routinely require medical evidence for every period of illness. This reflects current DfE guidance, which states that medical evidence should only be required in a minority of cases.

Medical and other appointments

Parents/carers should, wherever possible, arrange medical and dental appointments outside school hours.

Where this is not possible, parents/carers should provide the school with appropriate information and give advance notice wherever possible.

The school may request evidence of an appointment where appropriate.

Leaving school during the school day

If a pupil needs to leave school before the end of the school session:

- the parent/carer must report to the school office;
- the pupil must be signed out using the school's signing-out procedure;
- parents/carers should provide evidence of the appointment where appropriate;
- wherever possible, at least one day's notice should be provided.

The school will ensure that its records accurately reflect when pupils leave and return to school.

5. Term-Time Leave and Holidays

Regular attendance is essential to pupils' educational progress.

Parents/carers should not normally request leave of absence during term time for holidays.

In accordance with current attendance guidance, holidays taken during term time will normally be recorded as unauthorised absence. Term-time holidays are not generally considered to constitute exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers who wish to request leave of absence during term time must make a formal request to the Headteacher in advance.

Each request will be considered individually in accordance with statutory requirements and the circumstances presented.

Where leave is taken without authorisation, the school may refer the matter to the local authority for consideration of appropriate legal intervention, including a penalty notice where the statutory threshold and local authority procedures are met.

6. Attendance Monitoring, Intervention and Safeguarding

Attendance is a high priority at St Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary School.

Attendance data is monitored regularly to identify:

- pupils whose attendance is declining;
- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- patterns of absence;
- repeated lateness;
- particular groups of pupils who may require additional support;
- safeguarding concerns;
- barriers affecting a pupil's ability to attend regularly.

The school will adopt a supportive and early-intervention approach, working with pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance.

Home visits

Where appropriate, school staff may undertake a home visit when a pupil's absence is unexplained, persistent or raises safeguarding concerns.

The purpose of a home visit is to establish the pupil's welfare, understand barriers to attendance and identify appropriate support.

Attendance meetings

Where attendance concerns persist, the Headteacher or Senior Attendance Champion may invite parents/carers to a meeting to discuss:

- the pupil's attendance;
- patterns of absence or lateness;
- barriers to attendance;
- support available;
- actions required to improve attendance.

A **School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM)** may be arranged where appropriate.

An attendance improvement plan or other appropriate support may be agreed with the family.

External agencies and legal intervention

Where appropriate, the school will work with the local authority and other relevant agencies to support improved attendance.

Where attendance does not improve despite appropriate support, or where support is not engaged with, the school may initiate appropriate local authority or legal attendance processes.

Current DfE guidance sets out a range of legal interventions available where attendance support has not been successful or is not appropriate.

7. Persistent and Severe Absence

The school recognises the significant impact that persistent absence can have on educational outcomes, wellbeing, safeguarding and a pupil's wider development.

The school will identify pupils whose attendance is a concern and will provide appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.

Nationally, a pupil is classed as persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions, while severe absence is 50% or more.

The school will not rely solely on attendance percentages. Individual circumstances, patterns of absence, barriers to attendance and safeguarding information will also be considered.

8. Celebrating and Rewarding Good Attendance

At St Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary School, attendance is promoted and celebrated positively.

Good attendance and improvements in attendance are recognised through a range of age-appropriate rewards and celebrations.

Weekly celebration

Attendance is promoted through the Home School Letter, where classes and individual pupils achieving strong attendance are celebrated.

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Where a class achieves 100% attendance for a full week, a special reward will be sent directly to the classroom.

Termly recognition

Pupils' attendance may be recognised through:

- certificates;
- stickers;
- pencils and prizes;
- other age-appropriate rewards.

School displays

Attendance achievements will be celebrated through school displays, including displays within the dining hall and other appropriate areas of the school.

End-of-year celebration

The school will recognise pupils who achieve 100% attendance across the academic year through a special end-of-year celebration.

The school will also recognise significant improvement in attendance, ensuring that pupils who have overcome barriers and made substantial progress are celebrated alongside those with consistently high attendance.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is **Mrs J Logue**.

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- oversee the school's attendance strategy;
- monitor attendance and punctuality;
- identify emerging patterns and concerns;
- work with pupils and families to address barriers;
- coordinate attendance interventions;
- liaise with the local authority and external agencies where appropriate;
- ensure that attendance procedures are implemented consistently.

All staff

All staff have a responsibility to:

- promote the importance of regular attendance;
- model good punctuality;
- complete registers accurately and promptly;
- report attendance concerns;
- support pupils who experience barriers to attendance;
- contribute to the safeguarding of pupils.

Parents and carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- ensure their child arrives at school before registration closes;
- notify school promptly when their child is absent;
- provide appropriate information regarding absence;
- work positively with school staff when attendance concerns arise;
- avoid arranging holidays during term time;
- attend meetings and engage with agreed attendance support.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly;
- arrive on time;
- be ready to learn;
- understand the importance of good attendance;
- speak to a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult.

10. Monitoring and Review

Attendance data will be monitored regularly by the Senior Attendance Champion and Senior Leadership Team.

Attendance will be reviewed:

- daily;
- weekly;
- half-termly;
- termly;
- annually.

Attendance information will be used to identify trends, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and ensure that appropriate support is provided.

The policy will be reviewed in **July 2027**, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance or local authority procedures.

Senior Attendance Champion: Mrs J Logue

Policy Review Date: July 2027