



St Martin's Catholic Primary school



Attendance Strategy

St Martin's Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her full potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and the challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives, the school will establish an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and lateness. It will also establish a system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual support and advice.

For the academic year 2022- 2023 they are:

Aim 1:

To improve the overall percentage of attendance and improve pupils' punctuality at school.

The school aims to improve attendance to ensure that it is at least 96% full attendance each year.

The target for 2022 - 2023 is 96.0%.

This will be done by monitoring attendance regularly. Where there appears to be a problem the Attendance Lead contact parents initially (Appendix A.). If the parent doesn't respond or the problem persists the Attendance Lead informs the Head teacher. The Head teacher calls the parents into school to discuss the matter. The Attendance team then monitors the pupil's attendance daily. This will be recorded and reported to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and if the situation doesn't improve the EWO will issue targets. The school will also ensure that the quality of teaching and learning are of high quality. The school will also ensure the provision of a good curriculum that is relevant to the learner's needs. All the pupil's needs will be considered when the decision is made to contact parents. The class teacher and the Headteacher will consider the pupil's pastoral, social and cultural needs. Good attendance is celebrated. The school makes it known to the pupils, parents and governors that it appreciates good attendance. Attendance is a feature of a school assembly once a week when the class who has the best attendance receives a star. The class with the most stars receives a reward. At the end of each half term and at the year-end certificates and rewards are presented to those children who have achieved 97%+, 98% + and 100% attendance.

Aim 2:

To make attendance and punctuality a high priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and governors.

The Headteacher will report on the termly attendance figures to the governing body.

Attendance is reported to all parents twice a term to highlight the need to ensure good attendance and punctuality. Attendance is also included in the weekly newsletter

Attendance is discussed with the pupils at least weekly in assembly and as part of PSHCE lessons.

As agreed by Governors, the school will no longer authorise any holidays taken during term time.

Any holidays taken will be classed as unauthorised. Those of 5 days or longer, which would cause the child's attendance to fall below 97% will start the process with the EWO for statutory fines, which at present sit at £60.00 per parent with parental responsibility, per child. We will follow Halton local authority policies. This has no financial benefit to the school, but is a requirement, set by government, to support good attendance and therefore boost learning.

Aim 3:

To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance and punctuality related data.

The school uses an electronic registration system. The Headteacher and staff are able to access detailed information about any individual or group within the school. The Attendance Lead shares this information with the EWO. The attendance team receives a daily print out of each class' attendance, which triggers telephone calls/ home visits to see why the child is absent. Additionally, the Head teacher receives specific data weekly.

The school uses the prescribed registration format and system for completing registers.

Children who arrive late are recorded as late. Children who arrive after 0930 hrs are recorded as U.

Persistent lateness (more than 15%) will trigger a parent meeting. Lateness is reported to parents half termly as number of minutes of learning lost due to lateness.

Promoting attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in every circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Responsibilities and Attendance procedures and Monitoring

| Daily | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <u>Senior Leaders</u> | <u>EWO</u> | <u>Attendance team</u> | <u>Class teachers</u> | <u>Families</u> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. Daily attendance meeting with Attendance Lead Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Curriculum Leaders regarding support work with identified pupils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding home visits as required. Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. Phone call contact with pupils/parent/carers Home visits Instigation of legal proceedings Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring staff have completed AM/PM registers Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the register via SIMS Identify pupils who are absent from school without reason (before 9.15am) Log on SIMS, parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences Ensure all Late arriving pupils are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to SIMS Messages sent to parent/carers who have failed to contact regarding their child's absence and also pupils who arrive late. First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message/phone call has been returned. SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required Supporting staff with registration queries, support the interventions of the class teachers. Logging attendance of all pupils going out /in school for medical, dental or visits Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and pupils who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the First Day contact systems. Daily late process, log and send actions for relevant staff. Daily Attendance/ PA report sent to senior leader with responsibility for attendance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registers are completed on SIMS each day on time Ensure attendance has a high profile in class Discuss absence with pupils returning to school Welcoming long-term absentees back into the class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive on school site by 8.40 am Be in class on time for registration at 8.50 am |

Weekly

| <u>Senior Leaders</u> | <u>Attendance team</u> | <u>Class teachers</u> |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. Weekly attendance meeting with attendance team to plan actions Liaison with EWO, Pastoral team and Curriculum Leaders regarding support work with identified pupils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing SLT and EWO of pupil patterns of absence. Provide weekly pupil attendance figures for class teachers and pupil rewards Discuss punctuality issues with identified pupils and parent/carers Pupils rewards Provide weekly punctuality data for class teacher and pupil rewards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all members of the class know the school target and their current attendance Monitor/follow up identified pupil absence by making contact with parent/carers where appropriate. Update information on attendance boards Organise help for pupils to catch up on missed work due to prolonged absence |

Half Termly

| <u>Headteacher</u> | <u>Senior leaders</u> |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents evenings Monitor and track attendance/PA Action Plans Liaise with EWO to share information and agree joint actions re action plans or other pupils causing concern | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement Use attendance data to identify and take action to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy |

Termly

| <u>Headteacher</u> | <u>Senior leaders</u> |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures school policy and procedures reflect the school's Catholic vision, and actions are taken in the spirit of hope, compassion and reconciliation. Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all pupils both in school and those at off-site provision School Attendance Review alongside the EWO Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, for plans to raise attendance Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively. Report to SLT on attendance matters Ensure school prospectus, parent/carers welcome booklet and school newsletters promote attendance. |

Attendance rewards system

Individual pupil rewards

Every term

100% attendance certificates

Lottery for a £10 voucher

Every year

100% Perfect attendance award, badge and prize

98%+ Excellent attendance award



Class rewards

Each week the class with the highest attendance over 90% gets a star

Class with lowest numbers of lates <10 gets a star

The class with most stars at the end of the term gets a class reward such as school trip or event e.g. class breakfast/shopping trip

Every time a class has 100% attendance they receive an attendance star – when they have 10 they get a class reward such as own clothes day or movie afternoon

Class with best overall attendance each child given a small prize at the end of the academic year

Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

Expectations of Parent/Carer

We believe every child has the right to access a high quality education so they can 'grow in wisdom and stature' (Luke 2:52). Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law. Parents are expected to support The School's attendance policy by positively encouraging children to attend school on time every day

- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours.
- Contact school preferably by 8:40am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this text to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact the Family Support worker if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of three emergency contact details be provided)
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays.

If a pupil is absent, we will

- Telephone and text the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9am.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised a member of school staff will conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited to meet with the head teacher.
- If absences persist the head teacher will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

Understanding types of Absence

Schools must record every absence that a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by calling the school on the first day of absence and in writing on the pupil's return.

Authorised Absence

Authorised Absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised Absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. St Martin's Catholic school will issue warning letters to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 school days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

Persistent Absence

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.

Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.

Parent/Carers are asked to contact the school in the first instance.

Why Regular Attendance is very important

Our vision is for all children to flourish in our schools and experience 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning.

Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or missing 4 whole weeks over the year - approximately 120 lessons per year missed.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance and encourages good communications between home and school.

The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists the EWO will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

Types of absence

Medical and Dental Appointments:

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received via one of the methods already listed.

Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents expected to return their children to the school following the appointment whenever possible.

Procedure for taking a child out of school during the school day:

Parents/carers report to the office. The child is collected from class by the office staff. The absence is recorded on the iPad with the reason, time and whether the child is returning to school.

Special Occasions:

A request to attend a special occasion during school time e.g. family wedding, must be made in advance and the head teacher will make the decision as to whether to authorise the absence. If a child has good attendance the head teacher will try to accommodate this wherever possible. Parents will be notified of the head's decision.

Bereavement:

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The head teacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

Days of Religious Observance:

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted authorised absence. The head teacher should be consulted in advance of the event. A maximum of two days' absence during any academic year will be granted for religious observance.

Lateness:

Parents are expected to bring their children punctually by 8.50am for the start of the school day. Children arriving after this must be by their parents using the iPad in reception. They will receive a late mark in their class register. Children arriving after 9.30 am without an adequate explanation from their parents will be given an unauthorised absence for the session. Families who regularly arrive late will be contacted by the head teacher.

Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances:

The Law states that parents **DO NOT** have an automatic right to take their child out of school in term-time. By prior application, you may apply for a Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances. This will be considered in line with Government and Local Authority guidance. The parent/carer should arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss the request. Where permission has been given for a leave of absence and it is later found that the child has spent the time at home this will then be counted as an unauthorised absence.

Where leave of absence has been requested for a holiday, or other unauthorised reason, a child's attendance level must remain over a level of 95%. If their attendance drops below this, we will not authorise any further absence for illness unless we receive medical evidence from a medical professional or there is an underlying medical illness.