

**St Marys Catholic Primary School**

*'Learning together in Faith and Love'*

## **ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

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## **Mission Statement**

St Mary's is a vibrant Catholic Primary School in North Kensington with a strong sense of community. We are a school that welcomes all children from the ages of 3 to 11 years. Our school serves the Roman Catholic Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Kensal New Town and other local parishes.

### **The aims of our school are:**

- To promote Christian values where children live, learn and celebrate the teaching of Christ.
- To provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and meaningful and where children can experience enjoyment and fulfilment.
- To promote the highest standards of teaching and learning within the framework of the National Curriculum.
- To develop in each child a sense of achievement, value and self-worth and to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- To help our children acquire the skills of independent learning and make sufficiently rapid progress.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where children feel valued and where they respect help and care for each other.
- To involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and promote good home/school partnerships.
- To develop in our children awareness and respect for the different cultures and religions represented in society and their responsibility to the wider community.
- To foster the continuing development of staff, parents and Governors in serving the community.

## **St Mary's School Values**

These are the values which will be explicitly taught, modelled and rewarded at St Mary's:

- **Kindness**
- **Respect**
- **Tolerance**
- **Honesty**
- **Responsibility (for ourselves and our world)**
- **Co-operation**

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## **Aim of the Attendance Policy:**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy, we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Local Authority Early Help Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

## **Expectations & Responsibility of Parents/Carers**

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will affect their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## **Punctuality**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

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It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time, the school has a 'soft start' gates open at 8.45am for KS1 and KS2, children to go straight to their classroom.
- Registration takes place at 9.00am and pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.15am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with initially between home and school but may be referred to the LA Attendance Team.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

## Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office, emailing.
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.
- Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.

## Illness/Medical absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.

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## Absence for Holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

*There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period. The school holiday dates are published on our school website and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during term time. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these but may be subject to change.*

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). The Headteacher will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Headteacher's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.**

## Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement may be authorised by the Headteachers. These requests must be discussed with the school. Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances, which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

## Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular attendance monitoring is carried out by the school. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

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## **Role of the Early Help Service & Local Authority**

- To investigate absence that exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 15 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Early Help Practitioner.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

## **Children Missing in Education**

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 20 consecutive days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority

## **Persistent Latecomers**

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 9:15am will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:15am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

## **Promoting Good Attendance**

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by

- By sharing % attendance on the weekly newsletter
- By awarding individual children who have 100% for each term.
- By awarding individual children who get 100% attendance for the whole academic year (September to July).

## **Leaving During the School Day**

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

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- Parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.*

### Attendance Procedures:

- Attendance will be monitored on a half-termly basis.
- If your child is absent 10% (or more), a parent/carer must meet with the class teacher where they will be issued with a first letter of concern.
- If attendance still has not improved in the next half term, a second letter of concern will be sent and a parent/carer must meet with the Attendance and Punctuality Manager/ Head of School or Executive Headteacher.
- If attendance still does not improve, a referral may be made to the Local Authority and fines will be issued.

### Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform St Mary's Catholic Primary School as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.