

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Date Written:	Summer 2016
Date Reviewed & Ratified:	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2016
Review Frequency:	3 Yearly
Date to be Reviewed:	Summer 2019

# MISSION STATEMENT

The family of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School believes that each person is unique and made in the image and likeness of God as expressed through Jesus Christ in the Gospels. We believe that our mission is to recognise, nurture and develop the God given gifts, talents and spirituality of each individual.

## Aims

- ◆ To inspire children to appreciate, develop and practice spiritual, moral, cultural and aesthetic values.
- ◆ To foster in children a sense of awe and wonder for God's created world and to have an awareness of their unique place in it
- ◆ To appreciate childhood as valued and right for all pupils
- ◆ To provide an environment which creates and fosters loving, responsible and creative human beings.
- ◆ To enable each individual child to achieve their full potential
- ◆ To base our school's curriculum on direct and practical experiences which harness children's natural curiosity.
- ◆ To provide a curriculum which fosters active learning, autonomy and choice.
- ◆ To encourage and nurture independence in children which enables them to become life long learners.
- ◆ To value and promote thinking and communication skills as a foundation for all learning.
- ◆ To provide a safe, secure, structured learning environment.
- ◆ To expect and develop the highest standards of self-discipline and positive behaviour from all members of the school community.
- ◆ To provide children with a positive self-image which develops respect and co-operation with others.
- ◆ To promote challenging and equal opportunities for all children within a positive and ordered environment.
- ◆ To encourage parents and members of the wider community to enhance our children's education.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** The Governing Body recognises that a child who is not at school is missing out on part of his or her education. Likewise a child who is late for school is missing very important social time with friends and introductions to the learning for the day/week. St Mary's Catholic Primary School provides a broad, balanced, creative, enriched and inclusive curriculum which all children have the right to enjoy. In order for all children to access the opportunities provided it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and punctually.

**1.2.** The Government states that:

- there is a legal responsibility for parents/carers to send their child to school every day;
- every child should be in school for at least 95% of all sessions;
- school is in session for 190 days a year, leaving parents/carers a further 175 days a year in which to have days out together and take a holiday.

## **2. AIMS**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School aims for the highest level of attendance possible and for all absences to be explained with acceptable reasons. Alongside this we want all our children to be in class ready to start the school day promptly.

To achieve this St Mary's Catholic Primary School aims to:

- help parents/carers understand the need for their children to attend school regularly and punctually;
- encourage good habits in attendance from the first day at school;
- ensure that parents/carers and staff are fully aware of the need to keep accurate records of attendance and the necessary procedures;
- minimise the number of absences and late arrivals.

## **3. KEY PRINCIPLES**

**3.1** St Mary's Catholic Primary School follows the West Sussex guidance which sets out the following principles.

- All registered pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.
- All children, irrespective of individual circumstances, should have an equal opportunity to attend school regularly.
- The school and the Local Authority, together with appropriate external agencies, will work together with the parents/carers for the best interests of pupils.
- The school's expectations of regular attendance will be made clear from the outset.
- Where necessary, intervention and enforcement measures will be taken, especially with regard to unauthorised absences and lateness.

It is vital that parents/carers and the school work together.

### **3.1 Extended Absence due to Illness**

If a child has had extended absence due to illness, St Mary's C P School will work with the child, parent/carer and any involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child and, where appropriate, will ensure that work is available at home.

## 4. PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE

### 4.1 Recording Attendance

The Class Teacher will take the register, recording who is present and absent from school, at 8:50 a.m. and will send the register to the general office. To ensure that lateness is recorded, the school gate will be closed at 8:50 a.m. and children will then need to enter the school through the front entrance.

If a child is late their name will be recorded in a 'late book' together with the time of their arrival and, where obtainable, the reason for lateness.

The register will also be taken after the lunch break.

It is important that all children are accounted for, particularly with regard to fire regulations.

### 4.2 Monitoring Attendance

The Office Manager will monitor the attendance of children at least half-termly. Any children identified as a cause for concern will be highlighted. Parents will be contacted to inform them of the school's concerns and offered support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be monitored and if there appears to be no improvement the parent/carer of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the child's class teacher or a member of the Inclusion Team to discuss and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the child from attending. If the parent/carer does not attend the meeting or, after this meeting, the child's attendance does not improve, a formal referral to the Attendance Support Worker will be made.

The Senior Leadership Team and Attendance Support Worker will review the monitoring procedure at least termly.

## 5 REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Parents do not have the right to remove a child for a holiday during term time.

Amendments to 'Pupil Regulations 2006' have removed any reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will review all requests for Leave of Absence from Learning and will only authorise those for which they are satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

**If a parent/carer chooses to take their child out of school for a holiday or other unauthorised absence, a Fixed Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child may be incurred, to be paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice being issued.**

**This amount is reduced by 50% (to £60) if paid within 21 days. The Notice will be sent directly by West Sussex County Council.**

## 6 LATENESS

- 6.1 Lateness is discouraged and persistent lateness is unacceptable. If a child arrives late and misses registration they must be signed in at the school office. The school day starts at 8:50 a.m. and the register closes at 9:20 a.m. Arrival between 8:50 a.m. and 9:20 a.m. will be recorded as "L" - Late before Register Closes. Arrival after 9:20 a.m. will be recorded as "U" - Late after Registers Close.

**6.2** Where lateness is identified as a cause for concern a letter will be sent to the parent/carer advising of the school's concerns and offering support in addressing any issues causing lateness. The pupil's punctuality will be monitored and if there appears to be no improvement the parent/carer will be invited to a meeting with the Class Teacher or a member of the Inclusion Team. If the parent/carer does not attend the meeting or, after this meeting, the child's punctuality does not improve, a formal referral to the Attendance Support Worker will be made.

## **7. PARENTS/CARERS' RESPONSIBILITY**

**7.1** Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis and to ensure their child is punctual. It is recognised that lateness at a Primary School level is the fault of the parent and not the child. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays in school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made.

**7.2** Parents are responsible for notifying the school of external appointments and, where possible, will make appointments out of school hours. Copies of Hospital/Doctor/Dentist appointments will be taken by the school office staff.

**7.3** Parents are responsible for informing the school of any absence. This must be on the first day of absence. They can telephone the school and speak to a member of staff or leave a message on the school's answering service. They should state the nature of the illness and when the child is expected to return to school. If a child is absent and the school has not received any notification of the absence then the school's attendance administrator will contact the parent/carer. Parents need to keep us informed of continued absence.

**7.4** Parents can be prosecuted under the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school with the following exceptions:

- The pupil was absent with permission from school;
- Failure of school transport;
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious group to which the family belongs and a completed request for absence was received in advance by the school.

**7.5** At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we will support and work with parents/carers who may have a problem with getting their child into school and on time. It is essential that parents/carers discuss any concerns or issue with either the Class Teacher or a member of the Inclusion Team so that appropriate support or help can be offered.

## **8. ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW**

**8.1** The law states that parents are responsible for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance at school. If students fail to attend regularly the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against them. Parents can be the subject of legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court. Each parent could be fined up to £2,500 and/or three months imprisonment for each child who fails to attend regularly.

**8.2 Fixed Penalty Notices:** A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is a fine given for unauthorised absence from school, rather than the matter being brought before the courts. It is issued per parent, per child. FPNs are used when a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10-school week period. A school day is two sessions - AM and PM. Late arrival after 9:20 a.m. is recorded as an unauthorised absence. A holiday in term time is an unauthorised absence (see Paragraph 5 above).

Policy ratified by the Governing Body:

Signed:   
**Chair of Governors**

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016

### Can I appeal?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Notice has been issued.

### Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Fixed Penalty Notice?

You cannot be prosecuted for the period of absence identified in the Fixed Penalty Notice. You may subsequently be prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absence from school. Each case is considered on an individual basis.

### **\*\* REMEMBER \*\***

School staff would much rather work with parents/carers to resolve poor attendance than resort to enforcement actions like Fixed Penalty Notices or Court

**Pupil Entitlement: Investigation**  
Fixed Penalty Notice Team  
West Sussex County Council  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Centenary House  
Worthing  
West Sussex  
BN13 2QB

**Email:**

[FPN.FWS@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:FPN.FWS@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Pupil Entitlement: Investigation  
Advice Line:**

03302 228200

## A BRIEF GUIDE TO

# Fixed Penalty Notices

**Sections 444 Education Act 1996**

**Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003**

**Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

This leaflet offers you a brief summary about the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) scheme and what it could mean for you.

### **What is a FPN?**

It is a fine given for unauthorised absence from school, rather than the matter being brought before the courts. It is issued per parent, per child. Please note **only** a Head Teacher can authorise absence from school.

### **Who issues them?**

In West Sussex the Local Authority issues them through the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

### **When are they used?**

When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period; a school day is two sessions AM and PM.

This includes; any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.

Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher. The Government has directed Head Teachers may only grant leave for a holiday in exceptional circumstances.

FPNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

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### **Please note**

**If the school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days; Pupil Entitlement: Investigation may consider a FPN is not appropriate.**

**In these instances the matter may instead be brought directly before the Courts.**

### **How much is the FPN?**

The FPN is issued with an invoice for £120 and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty.

If the FPN is paid within the first 21 days the amount payable is reduced to £60.

### **How do I pay?**

The information on how to pay is included on the FPN. Payment cannot be made in part or by instalments.

### **What happens if I don't pay?**

If you don't pay within the 28 days the Authority will consider instigating a prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the offence of poor school attendance. If proven this could result in a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child and/or a parenting order or a community service order and also costs.

### Lateness

Children arriving late may seriously disrupt not only their continuity of learning but also that of others. When pupils arrive late after the close of registers and fail to provide an adequate explanation they are marked as unauthorised for that session. Ensuring your child is in school and ready to learn from the outset is really important. Not only does it mean they are forming positive habits but it will also help their progress and attainment.

If your child is late to school they might:

- Miss important information provided during registration times including notices;
- Miss the start of the learning and the first part of the delivery of lessons which might then hinder their progress and attainment in particular subjects;
- Miss opportunities to socialise with their class mates at the very start of the school day;
- Develop bad habits which will impact on their attitude to work and the ability to obtain employment in the future;
- Be embarrassed;
- Be unsettled for the rest of the day, particularly younger pupils.

### Did you know?

Government research shows that: 17 missed school days per year = a GCSE grade drop

There are **190** statutory school days per year and **175** non-school days available for holidays and non-education related activities

**80%** attendance = One day off a week = 2 whole years of your child's time in school

**90%** attendance = One day off a fortnight = 1 year of education missed by the age of 16

## The Importance of Attendance



**St Mary's  
Catholic Primary  
School**

### Why is attendance important?

It helps to:

- ◆ Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ◆ Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ◆ Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ◆ Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life and is important to your child's future. For example, children who miss school can frequently fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance also shows potential employers that your child is developing positive habits towards a good work ethos. Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (five to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk being served a penalty notice or being prosecuted.

### How can you help your child with their attendance?

As a parent or carer, you can help your child by:

- ◆ Making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- ◆ Taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- ◆ Discussing any problems they may have at school - inform their teacher or headteacher;
- ◆ Not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work;
- ◆ Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays. This will help to prevent disruption to your child's education. Under normal circumstances, you should not expect the school to agree to your child going on holiday during term time.

If leave from learning in school time is needed, please contact the school for a form which must be filled in and returned PRIOR to the absence.

#### Government Legislation

*Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations removing references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments have made it clear that Head teachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.** These amendments came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.*

### Role of Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) work with schools and parents to advise and ensure that children and young people are able to benefit from the education provided. The EWS works with other agencies and groups addressing factors that contribute to absence from school. Additionally they help to protect children from exploitation and harm (including educationally) in the areas of child employment and entertainment. General questions around school attendance including the use of penalties can be answered by the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

[education.welfare.service@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare.service@westsussex.gov.uk)

Telephone: 03302 228200

#### Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) Unauthorised Absences

In West Sussex, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued if:

- ◆ Your child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period;
- ◆ You take your child on an unauthorised holiday during the school term and accrue 10 or more absences.

The FPN is an alternative to prosecution and gives you an opportunity to discharge your criminal liability by paying a fine of £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If you pay within 21 days the fine will reduce to £60.

After 28 days the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN.

## St Mary's Catholic Primary School

### REQUEST FOR LEAVE FROM LEARNING IN SCHOOL TIME FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Pupils are <b>only</b> in school for 190 days each year. There are <b>175 days for holidays and other activities.</b> 80% attendance represents <b>1 day off a week.</b> 90% attendance represents <b>1 day off per fortnight.</b>			
<b>How to use this form:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use for all absence requests other than sickness.</li> <li>Return to the school office <b>BEFORE</b> the date of requested absence.</li> <li>Use a separate form for each child and each absence.</li> </ul>			
<b>Guidance:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during school term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers requesting absence during term time should provide full details in order for the Headteacher to decide if there are exceptional circumstances.</li> <li>The Government default is that absences are Unauthorised and that Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued.</li> </ul>			
<b>Parent Guardian to complete this section:</b>			
Name of Child:		Class:	
Date of Birth (in in EYFS):		Year Group:	
Is this the first request for absence this academic year (September – July)?		Yes / No:	
First Day of Absence:		Number of school days requested:	
Final Day of Absence:			
Please indicate any other school to which you are applying for the same request:			
Please give specific reason for absence:			
(Continue overleaf if necessary)			
Signed:		Date:	
<b>School Office to complete this section:</b>			
Last Year Attendance:	%	Green Amber Red	Green More than 95% Satisfactory Amber 85% to 95% Needs Improvement Red Less than 85% Unsatisfactory
Current Attendance:	%	Green Amber Red	
Leave from learning taken so far this year	days	Green Amber Red	Register code for this request:
<b>Headteacher to complete this section:</b>			
Your request is <b>approved</b> and the absence as set out above is duly authorised.			
Your request is <b>not approved</b> . If the pupil is absent as proposed above, it will be recorded as unauthorised for the following reason. It may result in a fixed penalty notice being served.			
<input type="checkbox"/> I am unable to authorise holidays during term time <input type="checkbox"/> I am unable to authorise absences for birthdays <input type="checkbox"/> I am unable to authorise absence for travel to/from Religious Observance festivals <input type="checkbox"/> Currently your child's attendance requires improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Signed:		Date:	

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 We believe that our mission is to recognise, nurture and develop the God given gifts and talents of each individual.



## APPENDIX D

### *Examples of Letters to be Used*

Dear

Name of Child:            Date of Birth:  
**School Attendance: Education Act 1996 / Children Act 1989**

An attendance review has highlighted all students whose attendance is below 90% this academic year.

                    's attendance falls into this category and I enclose a registration certificate for your information.

The link between regular school attendance and academic achievement is significant and so it is vital that from January 2016                      misses no further time unless absolutely necessary through genuine illness.

We look forward to a much improved attendance rate this term. If you need any support in this matter or would like to discuss it further please contact                      .

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Anita K Shelton (Mrs)  
Office Manager

Enc.

Dear

Name of Child:        Date of Birth:

**School Attendance: Education Act 1996 / Children Act 1989**

An attendance review has highlighted all students who have been late to school on seven or more occasions during the Autumn term.

      's attendance falls into this category and I enclose a registration certificate for your information.

When children arrive late it may seriously disrupt not only their continuity of learning but also that of others. Ensuring your child is in school and ready to learn from the outset is really important. Not only does it mean they are forming positive habits but it will also help their progress and attainment.

We look forward to much improved punctuality. If you need any support in this matter or would like to discuss it further please contact

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Anita K Shelton (Mrs)  
Office Manager

Enc.