



St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools

Love one another

Always do our best

Take care of ourselves and the world around us

Attendance and Punctuality Policy & Procedure

To be Agreed: May 2022

Date for Review: May 2023

Statement of intent

St May's Priory recognise the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and the positive impact this has on school life. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Our aim is for every child to have the best possible start to each school day, enabling them to maximise their opportunities and fulfil their potential. We believe in establishing good routines and founding strong life skills.

We are committed to:

- ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise;
- promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour;
- ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all;
- implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010;
- early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils;
- rewarding regular attendance.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school;
- ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation;
- having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The head teacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school;
- ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures;

- ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too;
- ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently;
- modelling good attendance behaviour;
- using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated;
- where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The School Business Manager's Assistant is responsible for informing the Local Authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- are being educated from home;
- no longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school;
- have an authorised medical note;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning;
- have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school;
- arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- providing accurate and up-to-date contact details;
- providing the school with more than one emergency contact number;
- updating the school if their details change;
- the attendance of their children at school;
- promoting good attendance with their children.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- arrival at school after the register has closed
- not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- an absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- an absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- arrival at school after the register has closed
- absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absenteeism:

- missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Pupil expectations

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, **96 percent** throughout the year.

WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work;
- attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures;
- establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - sending letters to parents.
 - engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - using fixed penalty notices

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps;
- meet with parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having;
- establish plans to remove barriers and aim to provide additional support;
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress;
- consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- children in need
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Haringey's Children Missing in Education team children.missingeducation@haringey.gov.uk

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

Registration

The school gates are open from 8.50am, with pupils expected to be **in class and ready for the day at 9 am**. Children arriving after this time are greatly disadvantaged, having missed out on time to settle in class and valuable lesson input. Late arrivals are also highly disruptive to others.

Pupils arriving after the gates have closed at 9 am must enter via the office and be signed in as late; their arrival time will be marked on the register.

Pupils arriving after 9.30 am will be marked as absent for that session. **This will affect your child's attendance percentage.**

Absence Procedures

Parents must inform the school of absences via the absence line or admin@stmarysrcpriory.haringey.sch.uk by 9.30 am each day. If the school has not been notified of an absence, a phone call will be made to parents, followed up by a second phone call if no response.

Absences due to medical appointments will only be authorised with supporting evidence.

Please arrange non urgent appointments outside of school time where possible.

Absences due to illness are authorised at the Headteacher's discretion. If your child is absent for 5 consecutive days/10 consecutive sessions supporting evidence may be requested.

All other school time absence must be requested using the Absence Request form. The Headteacher is only at liberty to authorise absence in **exceptional** circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence, which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The Headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- immediately before and during assessment periods
- when a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the head teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

End of day

Parents/carers are expected to be at the gate, ready to collect their child, at their allotted dismissal time. If your child attends an after school activity club, they must be collected promptly after each session, or they risk losing their place. Late collection has an immense impact on staff and can be confusing and distressing for children.

Monitoring

Class teachers will speak to parents regarding any concerns in the first instance. Letters will be issued termly to those with attendance below the national expectation of 96%, those who are persistently late, and those who are consistently collected after class collection time.

If there is no improvement, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Assistant Head (or a member of the Senior Leadership Team) to discuss how we may support you in addressing our concerns.

Persistent absenteeism may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Fixed penalty notices may be issued where attendance fails to improve or for holidays taken during term time.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, parents are informed of the concern, and a formal meeting will usually be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the Local Authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- treat staff with respect;
- actively support the work of the school;
- call staff for help when they need it;
- communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

Attendance register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- present
- absent
- attending an approved educational visit
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Young carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be

taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

IN CONCLUSION

It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

School greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The School is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.