



## St Marie's School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

### Attendance Policy

*'Each child has a divine beginning and an eternal destiny. We help him/her on that journey.'*

*(St Marie's Mission Statement)*

#### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

During the years that children attend St Marie's School, we aim to educate the whole child, preparing them to enter secondary school with a positive self-esteem, a sound foundation of learning and an eagerness to develop further their intellectual and moral faculties.

The school works hard in partnership with parents and the Sheffield Young People and Families Directorate to recognise and value individuals' needs and to respond to these needs.

These aims can only be fulfilled by commitment from all interested parties and is dependent upon children's regular and punctual attendance.

##### **1.1. Aims and targets**

- 1.1.1. To encourage all pupils to attend school and achieve their maximum potential
- 1.1.2. To monitor individual and whole school attendance and measure against agreed targets
- 1.1.3. To ensure that pupils and their parents understand and support the procedures in place to record and monitor attendance
- 1.1.4. To ensure that all staff and governors understand and support the policy
- 1.1.5. To ensure attendance data to inform policy

#### **2. THE LAW**

The following legal requirements are placed upon parents, the Sheffield Young People and Families Directorate and the school under the Education Act:

- 2.1. Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- 2.2. The Sheffield Young People and Families Directorate must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school

- 2.3. The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- 2.4. The school must report to the Sheffield Young People and Families Directorate pupils who fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than 10 days without explanation
- 2.5. The Sheffield Young People and Families Directorate has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities
- 2.6. Failure by parents to ensure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law
- 2.7. Fixed penalty notices can be issued by the Sheffield Young People and Families Directorate under certain circumstances including unauthorised leave in term-time (See policy attached).

### **3. PARTNERSHIP – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **3.1. What the school expects of its pupils:**

- 3.1.1. to attend school regularly, on time and in a fit condition to learn
- 3.1.2. be prepared to work by bringing suitable equipment
- 3.1.3. co-operate with attendance procedures and inform staff if there are issues which prevent attendance

#### **3.2. What the school expects of parents:**

- 3.2.1. to fulfil their legal responsibility to encourage pupils to attend regularly and on time
- 3.2.2. to inform school on the first day of the reason for absence.
- 3.2.3. to ensure pupils are adequately prepared for the school day – including having the appropriate equipment
- 3.2.4. to inform school of problems preventing attendance
- 3.2.5. to arrange holidays out of term time. If this is unavoidable, permission should be requested from the Head teacher by completing an absence request form. The Head teacher will decide whether or not the holiday can be authorised (See Term Time Leave Policy)
- 3.2.6. to arrange non-urgent medical and dental appointments out of school hours. If this is unavoidable, school should be informed, and an authorised absence pass obtained.

#### **3.3. What parents and pupils can expect of the school:**

- 3.3.1. to encourage good attendance
- 3.3.2. to set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- 3.3.3. to make efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance and punctuality
- 3.3.4. to make first day contact with parents where absenteeism is unexplained
- 3.3.5. to promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness when problems arise

- 3.3.6. to liaise on a regular basis with the Attendance and Inclusion Service to support parents and pupils where needed.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

### **4.1. Registration procedures**

- 4.1.1. Morning Registration is at 8.55am. Any pupils arriving after 8.55am will receive a late mark. Please note, the pupil must be in their classroom at this time.
- 4.1.2. Registers will be closed at 9.25am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked absent for the morning session. (Pupils travelling on the School buses will not be marked late if the bus is late)
- 4.1.3. Afternoon registers are taken at 1.05pm for all pupils. Registers will close at 1.10pm. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked absent for the afternoon session.
- 4.1.4. Class teachers must ensure the registers are completed at the correct times. Registers are to be completed electronically and saved to the school management system, so that they can be accessed by the school office after each registration.

### **4.2. Responding to Lateness**

- 4.2.1. Pupils arriving after 8.55am must report to the office and sign in the late book giving a reason for their lateness.
- 4.2.2. Where a pupil is frequently late, parents will be contacted and where appropriate the Attendance and Inclusion Office notified.

### **4.3. Responding to Absence**

Unless authorised by the school, absence will be classed as unauthorised. A letter or explanation from the parents does not of itself authorise an absence: only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered authorises the absence.

- 4.3.1. Parents are requested to contact school on the first day of absence giving a reason – this can be by phone call, note or calling in to the office. **A verbal message from a sibling will not be accepted.**
- 4.3.2. If no contact has been made by a parent/carer the school will initiate, contact on the **first day of absence if verbal contact could not be made a letter will be sent out to parents.**
- 4.3.3. Where the absence is accepted, the absence will be authorised using the appropriate symbol as indicated on the register code sheet attached to each register. Acceptable reasons would include illness, unavoidable medical/dental problems, agreed religious observance, bereavement and exceptional circumstances. **The school may request medical evidence if there are frequent absences due to illness**

- 4.3.4. If there are any doubts about the legitimacy of any notes or reasons given for absence this should be reported immediately to the Head teacher who will contact home and may inform the Attendance and Inclusion Office.
- 4.3.5. Absences will not usually be authorised for circumstances such as:
- (a) staying at home because someone else is sick
  - (b) day trips,
  - (c) shopping
  - (d) haircuts
  - (e) missed bus
  - (f) slept late
  - (g) birthdays
- 4.3.6. If an explanation of absence is not provided or accepted by the school as a valid reason, the child will receive an unauthorised absence mark. If this becomes a persistent problem, parents may be contacted by the Head Teacher and a referral may be made to the Attendance and Inclusion Service resulting in contact from the Educational Welfare Officer.
- 4.3.7. Telephone messages from parents are received in the Office and recorded at the bottom the register for the week of any absences. Messages may be passed on to the class teacher in note form.
- 4.3.8. Requests for absence should be made by filling in the Request for Absence Form, which is available from the Office. This must be filled in prior to the visit and, where possible, in good time to enable the office to process the form appropriately.

## 5. HOLIDAYS

- 5.1. **What the regulations say.** The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- 5.2. **Parents are strongly encouraged not to book a holiday in term time.** Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. DfE guidance states holidays should only be taken outside term time. It is stressed that any application for leave “must be in exceptional circumstances”, and that more detail must be sought to be satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist before authorisation can take place. Parents and carers are therefore strongly advised not to book holidays before seeking permission from the school for exceptional leave, as there is now a greater risk of unauthorised leave leading to fines being applied.
- 5.3. In exceptional circumstances, parents must apply to the school for permission in advance of the holiday. An Application for Absence form must be completed and

authorised by the school. If this is not done the holiday will be classed as unauthorised and the Attendance and Inclusion Service may be informed. The school will not normally supply work for any pupil taking holidays in term time.

- 5.4. **Holidays will not be authorised for any reason for the first two weeks of any school year (i.e. the first two weeks when the pupils start in September) or for the first week of any half term (i.e. the first week after any half term holiday).** This is because new topics are introduced, and new routines set up at these times and it is especially important that pupils are present in school.
- 5.5. Extended Term Time Leave is leave considered in exceptional circumstances for pupils visiting families in their home land, but this can only be used once during the pupils' time at Primary School. (See Extended Leave in Term Time Policy)

## **6. RESPONDING TO POOR ATTENDANCE**

- 6.1. The school will always attempt to resolve any problems relating to attendance as early as possible
- 6.2. Parents will be contacted where there are attendance problems
- 6.3. Ongoing attendance problems will be monitored by the school and in consultation with the Attendance and Inclusion Officer
- 6.4. A referral may be made to the Attendance and Inclusion Service requesting a home visit by an Education Welfare Officer. This will always be considered for those pupils with attendance less than 90% during the previous half-term, which is the threshold for persistent absence.
- 6.5. A referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Service requesting a home visit by an Education Welfare Officer may also be considered for pupils with higher attendance but where there are patterns of absence or issues that need to be discussed.
- 6.6. Where attendance improves to an acceptable level the pupil will be removed from the concerns list.

## **7. RESPONDING TO GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- 7.1. The school will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality throughout the year, e.g. through 'Punctuality Week' or class competition, as is appropriate.
- 7.2. At the end of the Year any pupil who has achieved 100% attendance for the year will receive a special Attendance award voucher.

## **8. COLLECTING AND ANALYSING ATTENDANCE DATA**

- 8.1. Whole school and individual computerised attendance is produced regularly by the school office.
- 8.2. The Head Teacher, Business Support Manager and Learning Mentor agrees a list of pupils whose attendance and / or punctuality is of concern and will be monitored. Pupils with poor attendance will usually have less than 90% attendance.

## **9. ATTENDANCE TARGETS**

The Attendance Target for the year is 97.2%

## **10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **10.1. Head teacher**

- 10.1.1. Will monitor attendance data
- 10.1.2. Will follow up any cause for concern
- 10.1.3. Will report to governors on attendance percentages at an annual Full Governing Body meeting through the Head Teacher's report.

### **10.2. Governors**

- 10.2.1. Will support the school policy

### **10.3. Class teachers**

- 10.3.1. Will accurately complete attendance register at the appropriate times
- 10.3.2. Will pass on to the head teacher any individual causes for concern

### **10.4. Clerical Staff**

- 10.4.1. Will register any pupil who arrives late
- 10.4.2. Will maintain the SIMS system
- 10.4.3. Will pass on to the Head Teacher any cause for concern

### **10.5. Learning Mentor**

- 10.5.1. Will support the school to develop policies and whole school strategies for improving attendance
- 10.5.2. Will offer support to analyse school data and identify targets and formulate an attendance plan
- 10.5.3. Will work with families where there are complex issue, which might prevent good attendance.

### **10.6. Education Welfare Officer**

- 10.6.1. Will receive referrals from the school
- 10.6.2. Will visit parents at home where there are concerns regarding attendance or excessive lateness. This will include an assessment of the situation and implementation of strategies to achieve an improvement in attendance
- 10.6.3. Initiate appropriate action from other agencies when necessary.