

Date of Policy	Updated October 2016
Author	Mary Byrne
Date approved by Governors	November 2015
Review date	October 2018

Attendance Policy

This policy was developed through consultation with the Headteacher, Senior member of staff responsible for Attendance, St Mark's Catholic School Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). It will be reviewed annually by the Governors'

Mission Statement for Attendance

- Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- Good attendance is crucial to maximising pupils potential, progress and achievement.
- Good school attendance and behaviour reduces social exclusion
- The relationship between attendance and a pupil's attitude to learning and behaviour is understood by all staff.
- Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life.
- The staff of St Mark's School will work in partnership with parents and other professionals to improve attendance, to identify vulnerable pupils and to meet the needs of those whose attendance is poor.
- Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and explicitly recognised as such by St Mark's Catholic School. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all and promotes inclusion for all pupils.
- St Mark's Catholic School aims to improve its annual attendance by creating a culture where good attendance is a "normality"

Legal duties

This policy takes account of the statutory duties as set out in:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) regulations 2006 as amended
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (School Day and School year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Change of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education Act 2002 and 2005
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended
- The Education and Skills Act 2008

Aims

St Mark's Catholic aims to achieve good attendance by operating a policy within which staff, pupils, parents, the Education Welfare Service and others can work in partnership.

The School will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if/when a problem is identified.

The School promotes good attendance by:

- Developing a positive classroom climate in which a positive group identity produces welcoming lessons.
- Having high expectations of prompt attendance throughout the school day
- Collecting and analysing data to highlight trends with regard to cohort, gender, subject and to set targets where necessary.
- Collecting attendance data from Primary Schools as part of the Year 6/Year 7 transfer information.
- Ensuring that attendance is a feature of assessment data sent to parents/carers.
- Monitoring lateness.
- Improving communication with parents about the importance of regular and punctual school attendance
- Involving pupils in developing positive strategies to improve attendance and making attendance a regular item on the School Council agenda.
- Giving attendance a continuing high profile by frequently updating information within year groups.
- Reducing the number of persistent absentees (PA) (pupils with an attendance below 90%)
- Publishing the Attendance Policy and times of the school day on the School website.

Responsibilities and Strategies

- The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) will monitor attendance throughout St Mark's Catholic School. The School is required to submit overall levels of absence and school attendance to the London Borough of Hounslow each half term. Attendance information is submitted to the DfE via the School Census.
- The designated teacher for Looked After Children – the DSL will monitor the attendance of these pupils.
- The Student Services/Attendance Officer will submit attendance data to the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral), PPLs and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) on a regular basis.
- Form tutors will monitor attendance closely.
- Staff who take pupils out on organised visits will give a list of the students, with dates and times of the visit, to the Attendance Officer.
- Staff who take pupils out of normal lessons for small group work will register them on the Register.
- Parents are informed of their responsibilities, the measures taken by St Mark's School and the Education Welfare Service to ensure good attendance and how to seek support or advice in relation to attendance issues.

- Vulnerable and “at risk” pupils will be closely monitored by form tutors, PPLs and by Senior Staff.
- Those responsible for pupils’ placements off-site will provide the Attendance Officer with a regular record of their attendance.

Working Partnerships

- A Service Level Agreement will be negotiated annually between the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and St Mark’s School with key roles and responsibilities defined.
- The EWO fulfils the statutory duty of the London Borough of Hounslow in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables the School and parents/carers to meet their respective responsibilities.
- Parents are informed of the procedures and expectations when their child is first admitted to the St Mark’s School. They will also be advised on the School’s policy at New Intake Evening.
- St Mark’s Catholic School works closely with the London Borough of Hounslow and other services to identify ways in which their work will support improved attendance.

Recording Attendance

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days each year unless there is a good reason for absence. Where a pupil is absent from school the school must differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. **By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents.** Generally school will accept an explanation as to why a student may be absent. However in certain circumstances School may require further evidence to justify the explanation e.g. high level of absence for minor health reasons, unusual patterns of absence for instance the same day each week or frequent broken weeks or, where the School believe unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.

Parents

- It is expected that parents will provide an explanation (rather than ‘ill’) if their child is absent on the first day and any subsequent days of absence. This can be by letter, telephone or personally at the office.
- If contact, explaining the pupil’s absence, fails to be made by parents, then the St Mark’s Catholic School will contact the home by telephone on the initial day. This will be repeated and followed up by a telephone call or letter if no explanation is received. These contacts will be recorded.
- A pupil who has been absent for more than 3 days with continued unexplained absence, parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer or EWO.
- Pupils who fail to return to the St Mark’s Catholic School on the agreed day after a fixed – term exclusion, with no explanation, will also be subject to first day contact by the Attendance Officer.

Registration

- The twice-daily registration of pupils (AM and PM) is a legal requirement. The accuracy of registration is essential and registers may be required in a court of law

for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. Printed copies of these registers are kept as a legal requirement.

- All staff must be vigilant when registering pupils for lessons, and report immediately any unexplained absence of a pupil who has attended lessons already during the day. This should be reported to the Attendance Officer and recorded.

Lateness

- All pupils are required to arrive at the St Mark's Catholic School, attend registration and attend all lessons on time.
- If a pupil arrives late, before the end of AM registration, they should report directly to their lesson where they will be marked as late. If they arrive after AM registration, they should report to Student Services to sign in, the Attendance Officer will record the mark accordingly.

- **“The Education Act, 1996 states:**

“It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him/her to receive efficient **full time** education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational need(s) he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Case law states persistent lateness does not constitute **“full time”** education.

Pupils who comes to school late are not receiving ‘full-time’ education. Therefore a parent is potentially in breach of the law.

- Persistent lateness to school will be questioned and investigated and may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.
- Lateness to lessons disrupts the learning of others and cannot be deemed acceptable. Any pupil receiving two late marks in a week will sit an hour detention.

Leave of absence during term time

In accordance with Government and LA guidelines the school will not authorise any absence for holidays. **Government legislation from September 1st 2013 states Schools can only grant requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.** Examples of exceptional circumstances would be:

- Military Staff returning from active service
- Marriage/bereavement of an immediate relative i.e. parent/sibling
- Funeral of extended family members

Requests for leave of absence during term time should be made in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance as possible. Parents who take their children out of school during term time and the absence has not been authorised are at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice. If the St Mark's Catholic School believe that an explanation for an absence is incorrect, after investigation, the absence will be unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each Parent/ Guardian payable up to £120 per Parent per Child for unauthorised absence.

Monitoring

- Form tutors will ensure that good attendance is maintained by regularly reminding pupils of the importance of attendance.
- Form tutors will check planners each week for explanations of absence and ensure all are recorded appropriately.
- Improved attendance will be acknowledged and rewarded.

Performance Indicators

- Improvement in overall School attendance figure.
- Reduction in persistent absentees.
- Home is contacted by the Attendance Officer on the first day of absence
- Home is contacted by the EWO after 3 days continuous unexplained absences
- Action is taken on pupils whose attendance is below 90%.
- To have 100% registration (am/pm registration and every lesson)
- All registers are taken within 10 minutes of the start of a lesson.
- ALL pupils below 90% attendance (authorised or unauthorised absence) will be tracked and monitored for improvement and where necessary, action will be taken.

Reviewed: October 2018