

St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



Strive to succeed in the presence of God'

Together – as a Catholic community
Everyone - children, staff, parents, carers and parish
Achieves – in their unique way and tries to be
More – like Jesus

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Contents

1. Aims

2. Legislation and guidance

3. Recording attendance

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

6. Attendance monitoring

7. Roles and responsibilities

8. Monitoring arrangements

9. Links with other policies

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We define regular attendance as being in line with the school average, which is typically around 96%

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils who are of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 08:50 and 09:00 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:10. A child arriving after 09.00 but before 09.10 will be marked as late and after 09.10 will be marked as an unauthorised late. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 for infants and 13:15 for juniors and will be kept open until 13:10 and 13:25 respectively.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence, e.g. if their child is unable to attend due to ill health, as soon as practically possible and by 10am at the latest.

Parents can do this by:

- emailing the school at office@st-monicas.enfield.sch.uk
- calling the school and leaving a message
- speaking directly to the office team in Office Hours (08:00-16:30)

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

3.3 Planned absence

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents can notify the school about medical and dental appointments in the same way as above (see 3.2) and it is requested that this is communicated in advance.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils who are regularly late (more than 5 occasions) will be monitored closely and staff will be in touch with the parents to discuss.

3.5 Following up on unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer at 10am on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the pupil's parent/carer emails and text messages will be sent. If there is no response by lunchtime, the school will phone the emergency contacts. If there has been no contact by day 2, the school will do a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

3.6 Reporting to parents

An attendance report is sent to parents each term. Where absence is below 90% we often send a full absence report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances.' We define 'exceptional circumstances' as significant family circumstances such as bereavement or medical matters.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. If parents wish to request time out of school for their child/ren, they must complete a "Request for time out of school" form which can be found on the school website. <https://www.st-monicas.enfield.sch.uk/parents/forms/> Ideally this form should be submitted to the school office a week before the absence is required.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

The school does not authorise absence if:

- a pupil's latest attendance is below 90% unless there is medical evidence
- the request is for the first week of a new school year
- the request is due to financial reasons (cheaper holiday)
- the request is for a holiday that could be taken out of term time
- the request is disproportionate to the event (eg. 2 weeks leave for a wedding)
- the request coincides with any statutory assessments

4.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school actively promotes good attendance by:

- Reporting to parents the attendance of their child at the end of each term.

The Clerical Officer is responsible for monitoring attendance and to promote good attendance across the school and specific groups. They also liaise with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion who may meet with parents to discuss support and also signpost services that might be of help. The Clerical Officer also liaises with the Education Welfare Officer and meets them to discuss progress of pupils who are below 90%.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. The school will also identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school records the attendance information on a Management Information System (MIS) called ScholarPack. This also provides reports and analysis at an individual, group or whole school level. The school also creates a tracking document for pupils who are being specifically monitored on a more regular basis.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos. They make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance and school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. They monitor attendance figures for the

whole school on at least a termly basis and challenge attendance data. The governing board also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The school has a link governor for attendance, The Headteacher reports the latest attendance figures to the Governing Body as part of her termly report. Other data may be shared with the link governor.

The name of the governor responsible for attendance is Bob Westbury.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Assistant Head Teacher)

The designated senior leader is responsible for leading attendance across the school, offering a clear vision for attendance improvement. They also evaluate and monitor expectations and processes and have an oversight of data analysis.

The designated leader is also responsible for devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data, arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

With the support of the Clerical Officer, the designated senior leader is also responsible for:

Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 6)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader for attendance is Daw Roper and can be contacted via the school office.

7.4 Class teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Admin staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They also transfer calls from parents to the assistant head teachers in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance if/when required.

7.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contacts the school to report their child's absence before 10am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

7.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day