

St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

St. Mark's is a successful school and your child plays a part in making it so. We aim for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education and it is vital that they attend regularly, your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Ensuring your child's attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and recurrent absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Table showing the link between attendance and attainment at GCSE

% Attendance	= Average absence	% 5 A*-C	% 5 A-G
100-93.5%		74.3	96.8
93.5-92.5%	½ day / fortnight	60.4	94.6
92.5-91.5%	½ day / fortnight +	53.1	92.8
91.5-90%	½ day / week +	44.6	89.5
90-85%	1 ½ days / fortnight	34.7	84.8
80 % and below	1 day / week +	26.7	77.9

Promoting High Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of high attendance is everybody's responsibility: Parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Make you child's attendance record available to you
- Celebrate good attendance and punctuality by class on a weekly newsletter and children receiving awards at the end of each term.
- Ask parents/carers to come into school when there are concerns over attendance or punctuality, so that we can work together to ensure your child attends school and on time.

Understanding types of absence

Every week absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carers), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or hospital, dentist appointments that unavoidably fall in school time. The school may request appointment cards or a doctor's letter before choosing to authorise an absence.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This type of absence can lead to School Attendance Services making home visits or legal proceedings.

- Parent/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Holidays (see attached leave of absence from Knowsley Council)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance doesn't matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more school days across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent/carer support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by Carol Sellers, our Learning Mentor. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan through EHA (Early Help Assessment) and the plan may include allocation of additional support through Learning Mentor or outside agencies to raise pupil's attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to School Attendance Services.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by 9.30am on the first day of absence 0151 288 8910
- Send a note in on the first day your child returns with an explanation of the absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Learning Mentor and if necessary the School Attendance Officer if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the School Attendance Officer if attendance does not improve.

Telephone numbers:

At times we need to contact parents about a variety of issues, including absences. To do this we need parents to keep us advised of current contact numbers including mobile phones.

School Attendance Services:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage about attendance issues. In most cases this resolves the matter. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persists, the School Attendance Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the School Attendance Service themselves to ask for help or information. The telephone number is available from the school office or the Learning Mentor.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the school day they may miss work and vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for you child.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 9.00am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not on time.

At 9.30am the registers are closed. In accordance with regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean your child has an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Learning Mentor and/or School Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

We understand that it can be difficult to only have a holiday when the children are off school.

Any period of leave taken will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice, which leads to a fine.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The target for minimum attendance at St. Mark's is 95% attendance. Good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Knowsley.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made and we ask for your full support.

The school has a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Those people responsible for attendance matters are:

Mr R. Coakley Headteacher
Mrs C. Sellers Learning Mentor
Knowsley School Attendance

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. AIMS

The aim of this policy is to set out the way in which St. Mark's Catholic Primary School monitors and promotes the attendance and punctuality of its pupils. St. Mark's is committed to maximising the potential of every child and good attendance and punctuality are essential to this aim. We feel this will be achieved, with the support of parents/carers by ensuring that leave of absence will not be taken in school time, other than in exceptional circumstances. Absence during term time for any reason interrupts the continuity of teaching and learning and disrupts the progress of pupils.

2. LEGAL CONTEXT

From 1st September 2013 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amends the 2006 Regulations and makes clear that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In exceptional circumstances St. Mark's may consider a request for leave of absence for one period of absence during the academic year.

4 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Head Teacher or person designated by the Head Teacher will determine what are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

The following are examples of exceptional circumstances:

- To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons
- Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has flexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed by the employer.
- There has been a bereavement or serious illness in the family and a leave of absence is deemed appropriate
- Leave of absence connected to children of service personnel

5 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

St. Mark's will have our Attendance Policy on the school website

- Parents/Carers will be required to complete a leave of absence request form available from the school office and return it to school
- Where possible parents/carers should submit the request 4 weeks prior to the date of the leave absence
- Parents/Carers may be required to attend an interview with Mr Coakley or Mrs Sellers to discuss their request for a leave of absence

- Parents/Carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for a leave of absence within 5 days of the date of the application

If the leave of absence is not agreed by the school but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

This policy after consultation with Parents/Carers and Governors will form part of St. Mark's Catholic Primary School Attendance policy.