

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School**  
**Canterbury Road, London, NW6 5ST**  
**Telephone: 020 7624 1830**  
**Email: admin@marycps.brent.sch.uk**



# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2018-19**

## **POLICY DETAILS:**

**Legal Status:** Statutory

**Adopted:** Sep 2017

**Version Date:** Sep 2018

**Last Review:** Sep 2017

**Next Review:** Sep 2019

**Responsible Person:** Governing Board

## **Contents**

- Letter From Headteacher
- 'At A Glance' Guide To St Mary's Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Mission Statement
- Aims of Policy
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Working With The Local Authority
- Expectations Set Out By Ofsted On Pupil Attendance
- Expectations Set Out By The Diocese Of Westminster
- How Our School Manages Pupil Absence
- Punctuality
- School Census Data
- Children With Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Children On Long Term Leave Due To Illness Or Disability
- Dental and Medical Appointments
- Bullying
- School Governors
- Safeguarding Children
- Transition To Secondary School
- How We Celebrate Excellent and Improving Attendance
- Support For Parents
- Useful Brent Telephone Numbers
- References

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have put together this booklet on our Attendance and Punctuality Policy to make it easy for parents to see at a glance their responsibilities and the expectations from the school.

The policy also explains the legal responsibilities of the school to monitor attendance and punctuality.

I do hope you will take the time to read this, and that you will support us in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality in our school.

It is well researched that a pupil's attainment is linked to attendance. ***'If a school can improve attendance by 1%, they will see a 5-6% improvement in attainment'*** (Department for Education)

Our school's clear message is "***every lesson counts, every minute counts***".

God bless

**Mrs Bridget Pratley**  
**Headteacher**

## **‘At A Glance’ Guide To St Mary’s Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

- We expect children attending St Mary’s to aim for 100% school attendance, unless there are medical conditions or other special circumstances which have been notified to the School Office.
- Your child must be in school by **8.40am** at the latest. With the exception of Nursery pupils, all children may arrive from 8.30am.
- Children arriving for the morning session after 8.45am will not be admitted to the school unless the school has received prior notice of an unavoidable appointment and this has been authorised in advance. If your child will not be in school by 8.45am, please ensure they arrive on time, at 12 noon, for the afternoon session.
- Please phone the school with a full explanation **before 8.45am** if your child is going to be absent **and** provide a written reason for absence when your child returns to school. The school has an answerphone service so you may telephone and leave a detailed message as soon as you know your child will be absent.
- Leave of Absence during term time will **not** be authorised for holidays. Parents who choose to ignore this school rule will be issued with a £120 Education Penalty Notice by the Local Authority (reduced to £60 per parent if paid within 21 days of issue date).
- Three days is the maximum authorised leave that may be granted for a bereavement – any extra days taken will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Parents should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. Please arrange these during holiday periods or at the end of the school day. An appointment should not result in a whole day’s absence from school unless the circumstances are exceptional.
- In accepting an offer of a place and in sending your child to St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, you are agreeing to fully support school policies, procedures and high expectations.

## **Mission Statement**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we strive to create a stimulating environment so that by learning, playing and working together, we openly follow Christ's teachings. We seek to offer every person the opportunity to be a unique and valued individual, sharing and developing belief in the teachings of Jesus through everyday relationships and mutual respect in our dealings with one another.

In order to achieve our mission:

- We stand on holy ground
- We will always open our doors in welcome
- We will always love and care for each other as Jesus taught us
- We will always place the Word of God at the heart of our school
- We will always be witnesses to our faith by following in the footsteps of Christ

## Aims of Policy

- To ensure the school meets their safeguarding responsibilities
- To improve pupil attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school and to communicate this effectively to pupils, staff, parents and governors
- To raise educational achievement of all pupils
- To prepare children for their adult working lives
- To provide support and guidance to parents and pupils
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- To promote and reward regular school attendance at whole school, class and individual level
- To ensure the school takes into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when monitoring and reporting on attendance issues



## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The school Governors along with the Headteacher will, at the beginning of each school year, set an attendance target for the school.

The school Governors are also responsible for ensuring that the names of all pupils are recorded on the school admissions and daily register. The Chair of Governors is Mr Alloysius Frederick.

The Headteacher, Mrs Pratley, has a responsibility to ensure that the daily register of pupils attending the school is taken and has designated the Admin Officer, Maggie McDonagh to monitor and report on attendance.

Parents have a statutory responsibility to ensure their children attend school. Failure to ensure your child attends school regularly will result in a referral to Brent's Education Welfare Service (EWS) who have a duty to ensure that parents meet this responsibility. The EWS can seek legal redress to secure a pupil's attendance if a parent fails in their duty.

## **Working With The Local Authority**

The Admin Officer liaises with Brent's Children Missing In Education Team and with the Brent Legal Team to discuss any concerns.

## Expectations Set Out By Ofsted On Pupil Absence

Our school is inspected periodically by the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted). When the inspectors visit, they will be looking at the school's efforts to improve attendance. Issues they will consider are:

- where a school's attendance lies in comparison with the national average
- use of data to improve attendance
- whether attendance has improved as a result of actions taken by the school, including agreeing realistic targets with its local authority and meeting them
- whether the school has been active in monitoring and promoting the attendance of different minority groups
- how attendance compares with schools in similar socio-economic circumstances
- whether reductions in overall and persistent absence have been sustained
- the impact of systems put in place to help learners catch up following periods of non-attendance
- the support available to those pupils who are unable to attend

It is therefore very important that our school makes attendance a priority.



## **Expectations Set Out By The Diocese of Westminster**

Our school is inspected by the Diocese of Westminster every 3 years. As a Catholic school, we are guided by an important and coherent vision of education. In choosing a Catholic school for your child you are, in effect, seeking an alternative model of education. Our Catholic school is clear and robust in the principles which guide us and the moral framework within which we educate. The aims of our school are to help everyone within the community to grow in faith, to make the most of every ability and opportunity they have been given, to achieve academic excellence and to prepare well for adult life in a modern and diverse society.

**To achieve those aims we require the children of our school to attend school regularly and to strive for the highest possible attendance.**



## How Our School Manages Pupil Absence

At our school, the attendance of pupils is recorded electronically. This helps the school to produce termly data through the School Census for the Department for Education. It also helps the school provide information on pupil attendance for Ofsted inspectors. Each reason for pupil absence has a special code and this assists the school to monitor persistent absenteeism. In our school we expect pupils to have at least 98% attendance. Parents of pupils attending this school have a responsibility to make sure their children reach or exceed 98% attendance. Through data analysis we can see which pupils fall below this threshold and take appropriate action.

Children with below 98% attendance may be contacted by our Headteacher either by telephone or letter. Parents may be invited to school to meet with the Headteacher. When the school has a concern about a child's attendance record, we will instruct a school or local authority official to conduct a home visit, even if a reason has been provided for absence. This is an important safeguarding measure to preserve the well-being and education of children. Such visits may be announced or unannounced.

### **(a) Unauthorised Absences**

At St Mary's, we have an expectation that parents contact the school on each day of school absence so we can meet our safeguarding responsibilities. If it is known that the absence may be more than a few days (e.g broken limb or chicken pox) we may agree to less frequent updates. Following all absences, parents must send in a written explanation or complete the school 'Reason For Absence' form. We are not obliged to authorise any absences and we may not accept a parent's reason for absence especially if the child's attendance is below 98%. Regular unauthorised absences may mean that a parent or parents could be breaking the law and they will be:

- issued with an Education Penalty Notice
- OR
- prosecuted in a magistrates court

In very severe cases, parents can be imprisoned for up to 3 months. Because school attendance is a very serious matter, we aim to have good communication about attendance matters with pupils and parents through our newsletters, academic review meetings and school assemblies. If there is a problem it is better if a parent speaks with the Admin Officer rather than allow a situation to escalate.



## **(b) Regular Pupil Sickness**

If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child's absences. This discussion may include other professionals including the school nurse. When a child is regularly absent due to illness the school may request a parent provide medical details from their GP before continuing to authorise further absences.

### (c) Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time

**Holidays during school time are banned.** The school is closed for 14 weeks of the year and parents are expected to use this time for taking holidays and visiting family. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays.

If you have an exceptional circumstance requiring leave during term time, you must write a letter to Mrs Pratley, Headteacher, explaining the reason. You may then be invited to a meeting at the school to discuss the matter. The final decision will be made by the Headteacher. Parents **should not under any circumstances** make travel arrangements during term time without discussing it with the school first, as they risk losing money.

Parents of children taken out of school for unauthorised leave during term time will be issued with an Education Penalty Notice (£120 per parent, per child; reduced to £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of issue date) and may also risk the child losing their school place. Our school has the full support of our Governors and the local authority in this matter with the Headteacher' decision being final and no right of appeal.

### (c) Bereavement Leave of Absence

At some point, most of us will be affected by bereavement. Whilst it is understood that bereavement often happens with little warning, we always appreciate a telephone call to let us know why your child is not in school. Three days authorised leave of absence is the most that will be granted for bereavement, with any additional days being recorded as unauthorised term time leave.



## Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by 8.40am **at the latest**. Children from EYFS provision (teachers will be able to confirm arrangement for our younger pupils) to Year 6 may arrive as early as 8.30am to read quietly in their classrooms under adult supervision.

The register is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The school has a 'Late Book' in which children's names are recorded if they have missed the class register. As well as recording that a child has arrived at school, this is necessary for health and safety reasons should the building need to be evacuated.

Children will not be admitted to the school after 8.40am unless the school office has received prior notification of expected late arrival. Where possible, this should be submitted in writing, in advance, to explain the reason e.g. hospital appointment. Alternatively, please ensure you telephone before 9.00am.

A child arriving after 8.40am should be accompanied by a parent or suitable adult who must report to the school office with the child. **DO NOT** leave your child at the school gate after 8.40am. This may be viewed as child abandonment and may result in a referral to Social Care.

When children arrive after 8.40am without prior notification, parents may be asked to take their child home and bring them back to school at 12 noon for the afternoon session. This action is being taken to minimise the disruption to the vast majority of children who arrive on time and are ready to learn.

Please also note that children arriving after 8.40am (without prior notification) may receive an 'unauthorised absence' mark which will have an impact on your child's attendance record. Children should be collected promptly from school at the following times:

**EYFS** must be collected at **3.00pm** from the **Early Years** entrance

**Year 1 to Year 6 children** must be collected at **3.00pm** from the **Main entrance**

If a parent is going to be late collecting their child they should ring the school office. Any parent who regularly collects their child late will be invited to meet with the Headteacher. In very serious cases of children being left late at school, the child may be deemed to be abandoned with the local police station being informed, as well as a referral made to Social Care.

## **Persistent Absenteeism and Late Arrival at School**

If a child has persistent low absence, the school will inform the parents and request immediate improvement to preserve the child's education. Parents will also be invited to meet the Headteacher to explain any specific reasons for low attendance so the school can look at potential streams of support. If attendance does not improve, a referral may be made to Brent Education Welfare and/or Social Care.

If a child frequently arrives late for school, this can also lead to a referral to Brent Education Welfare and/or Social Care. Late arrivals are marked as 'late' (code L) between 8.40am and 9.10am if a valid reason is provided. Children who already have 3 late marks in a term will have subsequent late arrivals (after 9.10am) marked as 'unauthorised' (code U).

All late arrivals after 9.10am are marked as 'unauthorised' absence (code U) if no valid reason provided. If late arrival after 9.10am is due to an appointment which could not be changed, this will only be recorded as an authorised absence if proof of the appointment is seen. Parents are however encouraged to make children's appointments during school holidays or late afternoon to avoid disruption to learning.

If punctuality does not improve, a referral may be made to Brent Education Welfare and/or Social Care.

## School Census Data

Our school must submit data to the Department for Education (DfE) on the number of pupil's that are persistently absent, for whatever reason.

- 20% absence is the equivalent to one day's absence, every week throughout the school year
- 20% absence over 5 years is the equivalent to a whole year missed!

**It is well researched that a pupil's attainment is linked to attendance. 'If a school can improve attendance by 1%, they will see a 5-6% improvement in attainment' (DfE).**



## Children With Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)

We have high expectations of attendance for children with SEND and there should be no reason why children with SEND have different levels of attendance. Children with SEND may require a higher proportion of medical appointments as a result of their particular needs. As for all children, parents should be encouraged to make appointments out of school time whenever possible. Children with a statement of SEND will have this reviewed annually and at our school, attendance will be considered as an important part of the review process as well as on an ongoing basis.

## **Children on Long Term Leave Due To Illness or Disability**

Occasionally some children have to be away from school over a long period of time due to illness or disability. We will ensure that if they are well enough they can continue their education either in hospital or by arranging home tuition. We will work closely with outside agencies to ensure your child continues their education.

## **Dental & Medical Appointments**

Wherever possible, parents should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at end of the school day. An appointment should not result in a whole day's absence from school.

## **Bullying**

Our school does not condone bullying. If bullying does occur, it will be dealt with as a very serious matter. No child should feel they cannot come to school for fear of being bullied. There is no place in our school for bullying!



## **School Governors**

The Headteacher has a responsibility to report on attendance issues at every full meeting of the governing board. One of the Governors' many responsibilities is making sure that each pupil's details are recorded, including address and telephone number. These are very important in case of an emergency. Parents should always ensure that the school has their current contact details. Our Governors support the Headteacher in managing requests for pupil leave of absence and take the position that families have "no right" to such leave. Our Governors decide the start and finish of the school day and determine the dates for the school term and holiday dates. Our Chair of Governors can be contacted via the school office.

## **Safeguarding Children**

Our school must be able to demonstrate to Ofsted that it knows the whereabouts of each child and the reason for their absence.

It is very important for the local authority to be able to track children if they are not attending school and, in some cases, for schools to make a referral to Social Care. If your family is moving house, please let us know if you will no longer require a place for your child, with the date that they will be leaving. It is also helpful to us to have the name of the new school that your child will be attending. If you do not have this information at the time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number so that we can contact you.

In line with Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006), children who leave the school, and their whereabouts are unknown, will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Their details may be entered on the Brent 'Children Missing from Education Database' if the child's whereabouts cannot be located.

When the school has a concern about a child's attendance record, we will instruct a school or local authority official to conduct a home visit, even if a reason has been provided for absence. This is an important safeguarding measure to preserve the well-being and education of children. Such visits may be announced or unannounced.

## Transition To Secondary School

Some children find the move from primary school to secondary school difficult and this can have a detrimental effect on their school attendance in Year 7. Our school aims to support Year 6 pupils in their transition from primary to secondary school by:

- having a lead member of staff responsible for transition
- preparing for change in Year 5
- continuity in curriculum between Year 6 and 7
- develop pupils' skills in managing their belongings and homework
- attending secondary school induction and taster days
- working in partnership with the secondary schools who take our children into Year 7
- encouraging Year 5 and Year 6 children to take personal responsibility to ensure they arrive at school on time and ready to learn

Children with a statement of SEND will have a transition review in the summer term before they are due to go to secondary school. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator for the new school will be invited to attend. A visit to the school will be arranged for the parent and pupil. We are committed to ensuring that all our Year 6 pupils go forward to their new schools equipped for a successful transition.



## How We Celebrate Excellent & Improving Attendance at Our School

The weekly school newsletter – St Mary's News – contains information about the classes with the highest attendance record.

Pupils with excellent attendance during the academic year will receive a very special treat determined by the Headteacher. For example, in previous years, children with excellent attendance were taken to a theme park for a whole day of fun. To qualify, pupils must also have an excellent punctuality record and not be late to school more than 10 times in the whole year.



### Support For Parents

- After school club
- Regular opportunities for parents to meet with the Headteacher / senior member of staff
- Academic Review Meetings
- Teacher / Parent Partnership

# Every School Day Counts

## Pupil Attendance Levels

100%	95%	90%	85%	80%
<p><b>190</b> school days in each year - your child has attended every day and had the opportunity to reach their full potential.</p>	<p><b>10</b> days absence means over 60 hours of learning opportunities have been missed. This will have an impact on your child's learning.</p>	<p><b>19</b> days absence is equivalent to missing a month of school.</p>	<p><b>28</b> days absence equates to being absent for a whole half-term. It will now be much harder for your child to make learning progress. This is a serious child welfare concern.</p>	<p><b>38</b> days absence is a very serious welfare and legal concern. Your child will have large gaps in learning and may have difficulty maintaining friendships owing to their frequent absence.</p>

## Useful Brent Contact Details

Education Welfare Service  
[ews@brent.gov.uk](mailto:ews@brent.gov.uk)

Brent SENDIASS (formerly known as Parent Partnership):  
Supporting the families of Children with Special Educational Needs  
020 8937 3434

Brent School Admissions Department  
020 8937 1234

Brent Children's Social Care  
020 8937 4300

## References

Improving Attendance At School (Charlie Taylor, DfE 2012) Advice On  
School Attendance (DfE 2016)

Code Of Conduct (Brent EWS July 2014)

Governors' Handbook (DfE November 2015)

Framework For School Inspections (Ofsted September 2015)

[School Attendance - Parental Responsibility \(DfE 2015\)](#)

[Children Missing Education](#) (DfE September 2016)

[Brent School Attendance Guidance](#)

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016