



St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy

<i>Date Approved</i>	<i>September 2026</i>
<i>Date Reviewed</i>	<i>September 2026</i>
<i>Date of next review</i>	<i>September 2027</i>

1. Statement of Intent

At our school, we believe that every child has the right to receive a full-time education and that regular school attendance is fundamental to achieving positive educational outcomes, wellbeing, personal development and future life chances. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where every pupil feels valued and supported to attend school every day.

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. We will work in partnership with pupils, parents, governors, the local authority and other agencies to promote high levels of attendance and remove barriers to participation.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality for all pupils.*
- Develop a whole-school culture where attendance is valued and expected.*
- Ensure pupils attend school regularly and arrive ready to learn.*
- Identify attendance concerns early and intervene promptly.*
- Work collaboratively with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance.*
- Provide support for pupils whose attendance is affected by health, SEND, emotional wellbeing or family circumstances.*
- Fulfil our statutory responsibilities regarding attendance monitoring and enforcement.*

3. Legal Framework

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an appropriate full-time education and attend regularly at the school where they are registered.

Regular attendance means every day the school is open unless a statutory reason for absence applies. Only the Headteacher (or designated member of staff) can authorise an absence.

4. School Attendance Expectations

School Day

School gates open: 8:30am

Classroom doors open: 8:45am

Registration closes: 9:00am

Registers remain open until 9:15am

Pupils arriving:

Between 8:45am and 9:00am: Present

Between 9am and 9:15am: Recorded as late (L)

After 9:15am: Recorded as late after registers close (U), which is counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

We expect all pupils to attend school every day and aim for attendance of at least 96% wherever possible.

5. Promoting Attendance

The school will:

Expect

- Promote a culture where attendance matters.
- Clearly communicate attendance expectations to pupils and families.
- Celebrate and recognise good attendance and improved attendance.

Monitor

- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Analyse attendance data regularly.
- Identify emerging attendance concerns early.
- Listen and Understand
- Meet with pupils and families where concerns arise.
- Seek to understand any barriers to attendance.
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with parents.

Facilitate Support

Support may include:

- *Pastoral support.*
- *SEND support.*
- *Early Help referrals.*
- *Mental health and wellbeing support.*
- *Family support services.*
- *Multi-agency involvement where appropriate.*
- *Formalise Support*

Where attendance does not improve despite support:

- *Attendance action plans may be implemented.*
- *Attendance contracts may be agreed.*
- *Local authority attendance support may be requested.*
- *Enforce*
- *Legal intervention will only be considered where support has not led to sufficient improvement and attendance remains a significant concern.*

6. Responsibilities

Governing Body

Governors will:

- *Promote the importance of attendance.*
- *Review attendance data and trends.*
- *Hold leaders to account for attendance outcomes.*
- *Ensure the school fulfils statutory attendance duties.*
- *Headteacher*

The Headteacher will:

- *Lead on attendance strategy.*
- *Ensure compliance with attendance legislation.*

- Review attendance data regularly.
- Oversee interventions and support plans.
- Liaise with external agencies where necessary.
- Attendance Lead meetings termly with West Northants

The Attendance Lead will:

- Monitor attendance daily.
- Conduct first-day response procedures.
- Analyse attendance patterns.
- Meet with families where concerns arise.
- Coordinate support and referrals.
- Maintain accurate records.

Teachers will:

- Complete registers accurately.
- Promote the importance of attendance.
- Identify and report attendance concerns.
- Support pupils returning after absence.

Parents must:

- Ensure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Notify the school before 8:30am on each day of absence.
- Provide reasons for absence.
- Attend meetings where attendance concerns are identified.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.

7. Reporting Absence

Parents should notify the school by using the absence form on the school website before the start of the school day.

Where no contact is received:

- The school will contact parents on the first day of absence.
- Additional contacts may be used if required.
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed where concerns exist.

8. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

May include:

- Genuine illness.
- Medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observance.
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher.
- Other statutory reasons defined in attendance regulations.

Unauthorised Absence

Includes:

- Term-time holidays not authorised by the Headteacher.
- Shopping trips.
- Birthdays.
- Oversleeping.
- Persistent lateness after registers close.
- Absence without satisfactory explanation.

9. Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Government states that holidays during term time should not normally be authorised.

Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and must be requested in writing in advance.

Parents should not make travel arrangements before written approval has been granted.

10. Attendance Monitoring

- Attendance is monitored daily, weekly, termly and annually.
- Particular attention will be given to:
- Persistent Absence
- A pupil is persistently absent where attendance falls below 90%.

Severe Absence

- A pupil is severely absent where attendance falls below 50%.
- Where pupils approach these thresholds, support and intervention will be implemented promptly.

- **11. Pupils Requiring Additional Support**

- The school recognises that some groups of pupils may face greater barriers to attendance.

Additional support may be considered for:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils with mental health needs.
- Children in need.
- Children with social workers.
- Young carers.
- Pupils experiencing medical difficulties.
- Pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

Support will be tailored to individual need and developed in partnership with families.

12. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

The school follows the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

A penalty notice may be considered where there are 10 sessions (usually 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period.

Where attendance concerns persist, the local authority may consider:

- Attendance contracts.
- Education Supervision Orders.
- Penalty Notices.
- Prosecution under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Support will always be considered before legal action is pursued.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if legislation or national guidance changes.

References

Department for Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, July 2026.

ATTENDANCE – WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR YOUR CHILD?

Above 96%	Excellent! A pupil with attendance of 96%+ is more likely to be successful in school and reach their full potential. You are giving your child the very best opportunity to succeed in school.
90-95%	Even with an attendance level of 95%, up to 60 lessons could have been missed. A pupil with an attendance of 90% at the end of the school year will have missed 4 weeks' worth of school. Please monitor your child's attendance carefully.
Below 90%	An attendance of 85% is 6 weeks of education missed over the year. Pupils are at serious risk of falling behind. Pupils below 85% are missing a substantial amount of school, more than a half term of absence, having a serious impact on their ability to reach their full potential. Individual pupils will be identified by the Department of Education as a persistent absentee. Attendance will be monitored.

