

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



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	Author:	SENIOR LEADERSHIP
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1. Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. St Mary's Catholic Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website or available from the school office. Whilst the school recognises that school attendance under the age of 5 is not compulsory, this policy represents good practice in attendance and so some aspects of the policy will be used to monitor the attendance of children younger than 5. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

2. Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of **97%** attendance for most children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Attendance Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued; and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Recognise the role of class teachers as they will be able to identify where attendance is having an impact on attainment.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.

- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

3. Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- maintain appropriate registration processes.
- maintain appropriate attendance data.
- communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- refer to the Attendance Service or appropriate agencies of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- ensure that all staff are aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns on CPOMS alerting the Wellbeing Team.

4. Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

The **governing board** is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Updating CPOMS where there are attendance concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be recorded appropriately.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

The **Head Teacher** is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Ensuring families are contacted where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the Attendance Service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's LA Attendance Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

The **Admin Team** are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the late log is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head teacher
- First Day Response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or text message)

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

5a. Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

5b. Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

6. Registers

1. Registers are legal documents and will be marked twice a day
2. Parents must always give reasons for absence to the school.
3. Schools are to determine whether absence is authorised or unauthorised in exceptional circumstances, considering factors such as frequency, duration, attendance patterns, i.e. within reason. Staff must be observant of situations where absence is continually condoned by parents.

The guidelines below clarify possible actions:

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
Illness	Absence without a valid reason
Medical Appointment / Dental (For the time of appointment including travelling) Family Bereavement	Latecomers beyond 30 minutes after the session has started Persistent lateness within the first 30 minutes of the day
Religious Observance	Babysitting children including siblings.
Interview / Work Experience	Shopping during school time.
Excluded Children	Special occasions, e.g. birthday.
Sports / Music / Exams	Holidays
Agreed other educational activity at the discretion of the Head teacher	

7. Reintegrating Long Term Absentees

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so the Wellbeing Team, in conjunction with the class teacher, will formulate a plan if they wish to arrange a phased or gradual return, allocation of a staff member to support on the child's return, consider whether Special Needs support is appropriate, ensure that all staff are aware of the situation and nominate a key person to monitor the child's reintegration into school. All children must feel welcomed back and know from whom they can seek help.

8. Registration

All the school doors open at 8.50am until 9.00am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00 am and by the afternoon session start time appropriate for the year group. All attendance records are documented using software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and are kept secure following guidelines from the DfE.

9. Lateness

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of 1996 Education Act. The school seeks to improve general punctuality and to improve attitude of persistent offenders by:

- a. Informing parents of our expectations and offering ways to help combat lateness.

- b. Contacting parents of persistent offenders and reporting to the Local Authority Attendance Team if no improvement is noted.
- c. Praising and acknowledging latecomers who improve.
- d. Ensuring that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons.
- e. Actively discouraging lateness, although sensitivity may be appropriate in some cases.
- f. Using other methods to encourage punctuality as seen fit by the school.

Once the doors are closed at 9.00am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9.00am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am (will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M). Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

10. Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full and accurate details of the reason for their absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a text message to ask for the reason for absence. If no reason is provided after 7 days then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. (Attendance Code O)

11. First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent.

There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will attempt to contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

We will continue to contact on subsequent days if we are unsuccessful in our attempts to speak to parents on the first day.

Illness. When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Out Of School Tuition (OOST Team) to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

12. Parental Request for absence request – exceptional circumstances

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any request should be on an official school holiday request form and handed in two weeks prior to any holiday/absence taken for consideration from the headteacher. Any request should be on an official term time leave of school absence request form (see appendix and downloadable from the school website).

Should the leave be taken which has not been authorised, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

13. Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least **97%**. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In our school, parents are required to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually; therefore, when we become concerned about attendance, we will inform parents/carers of our concerns. This will be done by:

1. Phone call or meeting with class teacher if pupil's absence is greater than 8%. This is to alert you to the concerns about absence and offer support in ensuring attendance improves. If no improvement:
2. Attendance letter sent home (see appendix) if absence becomes greater than 10%. This means the child is a persistent absentee and stronger measures need to be adopted to improve their attendance. If no improvement:
3. If absence becomes greater than 10%, and parents are not engaging in getting their children to school, then next attendance letter sent home (see appendix), asking them to attend a meeting with the Attendance Panel. (The Attendance Panel will consist of appropriate range of staff who can support the family dependent on need)
4. Parent contract drawn up at Attendance Panel meeting. If no improvement:
5. Referral for penalty notice

14. Monitoring Absence

Our Admin Team have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the attendance software (RM Integris). All attendance concerns and appropriate actions taken are discussed at regular wellbeing meetings.

At St Mary's we follow a zone alert system; the purpose of colour coding helps staff, parents and pupils have a clear understanding of our expectations:

Persistent Absentees: absence of 10% and above

Students in this zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult and to misbehave. If your child is persistently absent, you will be required to attend an attendance panel meeting and sign an attendance contract. Legal action may be taken against parents/carers of

persistently absent pupils.

Children at risk of becoming persistent absentees: 8% to 9.99% absence

Parents will be contacted by the class teacher to alert you to the fact that we are becoming concerned about absent rates. Students in this zone are at risk of underachieving due to their absence level. It is important that measures are put in place here to try to avoid these students falling in to the persistently absent zone. Students who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress. If your child is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee and support strategies from school are not improving things, then you will receive a letter from school to warn you of possible consequences.

Children with increasing absence: 4% to 7.99% absence

Parents of students in this zone will be offered support to help ensure their child's attendance improves.

Children with low levels of absence: 0% to 3.99%

We expect students to be in this zone throughout their education. Those children who are rarely absent are more likely to do well in examinations, have better job opportunities and develop strong friendships within school. This is our aspiration for all our children.

15. Children Missing From Education

Children absent from school for an extended period of time are considered to be Children Missing From Education this issue is covered by the Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance and Working Together to Safeguard Children: an inter-agency guide for practitioners. Extended absence from our school is considered a safeguarding issue and is dealt with in the schools safeguarding policy.

All schools must inform their Local Education Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admissions register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home school or home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school: in this case, St Mary's Catholic Primary School.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of the period; or have been permanently excluded.

15. Rewards & Recognition

Although good attendance is an expectation the school seeks to improve whole school attendance by offering incentives publishing best attending classes on the newsletter. These classes are also congratulated by having the attendance trophy in their classrooms during the following week. Individual attendance rewards are not given as this is discriminatory against children with chronic illness.

Appendix A

Parenting Contracts for attendance – guide for parents

What is a parenting contract?

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent or carer and either the school and / or the local authority. A parenting contract may be offered if your child has failed to attend school regularly. A parenting contract is meant to support you, the school and the LA to identify and address the issues surrounding your child's irregular attendance at school and encourage a positive working relationship to improve attendance. It is not intended to be a punishment.

What does it involve?

Everyone signed up to the contract will agree to take certain actions which are realistic and which address the issues of non-attendance for a specified period of time. You might agree to do things like getting your child up on time, signing a daily report card and reporting any difficulties to school as soon as possible. School might agree to inform you if your child does not arrive at school, deal quickly with any problems and involve other agencies that might be able to offer you additional support. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

Do I have to enter into a parenting contract?

Entry into a parenting contract is voluntary but it does provide you with an opportunity to get support to improve your child's attendance at school. If you do take up the offer of a parenting contract and try to comply with it, this may assist your case if the local authority decides to take legal action against you for your child's irregular attendance. If you refuse the offer or don't comply without good reason this may also be presented as evidence.

If you decide not to enter into a contract, you will need to try to find other ways of improving your child's attendance and it may be worth discussing how you intend to do this with the school or local authority.

How is a parenting contract arranged?

You will be invited to a meeting in school with a school representative. The Local Authority Area Attendance Officer may also attend. Depending on their age and understanding, your child(dren) can attend part or all of the meeting.

At the meeting you will be asked your views on your child's attendance and whether there are any underlying issues. Try to think about the reasons behind your child's absences, any particular difficulties you are experiencing at the moment and what would help you to improve your child's attendance. Also think about what you can do to improve attendance.

School will explain what support they can offer and whether any other agency including the local authority might also be able to help you and your child. You will be able to discuss what is expected of both you and the school and then agree the actions that will support improved attendance. If you choose to accept the offer, the final contract will be signed by you, the school representative and in some cases the area attendance officer.

National contacts:

www.direct.gov.uk School attendance, absence and your child

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport Behaviour and attendance - Parental responsibility

familylives.org.uk Truancy Helpline: 0808 800 2222

Local contacts

Email attendanceservice@derbyshire.gov.uk

If you require this information in audio, Braille or large print, please contact the Attendance Service to arrange.

Appendix B

Checklist of actions for pupils with unsatisfactory attendance.

All communication, including letters / texts/ telephone contacts / home visits / meetings in school (including school attendance panel meetings), will be recorded on CPOMS.

Action	Who?	When?	Next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake standard school procedures including first day calling processes and send letter 1a, 1b (Appendix C). 	Class Teacher Admin Team		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify emerging attendance concerns (including unauthorised absence) against school attendance thresholds. 	Wellbeing Team Deputy Head Teacher		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a key worker to engage with the child and parent/carer, remembering school attendance is a parental responsibility. 	Key worker		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members of staff who have contact with the child/family are aware and record any contact on CPOMS. 	All staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain the lived experience of the child and the views of the parent/carer to identify and remove all reasonable barriers to support the child's attendance. 	Wellbeing Team		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1 attempted home visit made by appointment. 	Wellbeing Team		

If attendance continues to be unsatisfactory and unauthorised, the following work will be undertaken.

Action	Who?	When?	Next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send letter to ensure parent/carer is made aware of their legal responsibilities and the possible consequences of non-school attendance. 	Deputy Head Teacher		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review child's attendance in accordance with the timescale for improvement given to the parent/carer and 	Deputy Head Teacher		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether a penalty notice warning letter should be sent OR if further preventative work is required. 	Deputy Head Teacher		

The length of the monitoring period is 15 school days

Individual penalty notice warning letter issued to each parent/carer liable for the child's attendance together with an attendance printout and penalty notice advice leaflet

Parent/carer named and the letter is dated and addressed to current address

Letter will be posted by first class post or hand delivered

Child's attendance will be monitored over the stipulated number of days (allowing 2 days for postal delivery not including Sunday)

Appendix C – template letter 1a

Dear parent,

We know the last couple of years have been difficult and has impacted children's education in lots of different ways. Let's not miss any more - the best place for children to be is in school, and the best way to catch up is to turn up. We want to help.

If your child is struggling to attend because they are not getting enough help, are nervous about going to school or are being bullied, it is really important to talk to us about it and be honest about the reasons. You can speak to the class teacher, wellbeing team, SENDCO or other members of staff. We can make sure the right support is in place for your child.

Help your child catch up with missed work if you can – missed lessons does not have to mean missed work. Check Parent Hub and Oak National Academy – there are lots of resources available to support you at home.

Why being in school matters

- being in school as much as possible is the best way to catch up
- school is not just about education – it is about making friends, enjoying new activities, building confidence and skills for future life
- being in school helps to keep children safe and well. Children with good school attendance are less likely to be involved in anti-social behaviour or crime
- children with good school attendance do better in school. Good attendance habits start at a very young age – by encouraging this, you will be setting out values for their future success in life

Top tips to help your child to enjoy, learn and achieve at school

- keep to regular bed and wake up times to help get a good night's sleep. This will help get them to school on time
- make non-urgent appointments like visits to the dentist and GP outside of school hours. If appointments need to be on school days, only take out time out for the appointment so they are in school for the rest of the day
- if you are not sure if your child can go to school because they are unwell, speak to school and we may be able to advise you
- book holidays and activities in the school holidays, not term time. Children are only in school for **190** days each year, leaving **175** for everything else
- check this NHS information about minor illnesses to see if your child is still able to go to school. Not all illnesses mean children have to miss school
<https://derbyshirefamilyhealthservice.nhs.uk/>
- report absence as soon as possible and tell the school why your child is absent and when you expect them to return

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Appendix C – template letter 1b

I am writing to you because **NAME** has been late to school **NUMBER** times in **TIMEFRAME**.

HE/SHE arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

- **DATES**

The school day begins promptly at 8:50AM and registration closes at 9:00AM.

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child does not miss important work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

We are committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to discuss how we can work with you to help improve **NAME'S** punctuality.

Please contact the Wellbeing Team on the number below to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Appendix C – template letter 2

Dear

I am writing to express my concern at **NAME**'s recent high levels of absence from school.

Absence greater than 8% will have a significant impact on his academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support **HIS/HER** education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help him to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please see below absence figure for last term as well as the best possible absence figure that can be achieved by working together by the end of next term. In order to reduce your child's absence figure, their attendance needs to increase over time. The target is calculated based on full attendance next term.

Absence figure for Term X	DATES	%
Absence target for Term X	DATES	%

We can support you in a number of ways in order to reduce your child's absence. I therefore request that you contact the school Well Being Team as soon as you can to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Appendix C – template letter 3

Dear

As you are aware, I am concerned about **NAME's** school attendance. I have enclosed a copy of **HIS/HER** attendance printout for your information. Whilst the average attendance for a child of **PHASE** age is **NUMBER** % your child's attendance is **NUMBER**%.

I am required to make you aware of your legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance. Under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 a parent is guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

If **NAME's** attendance continues to be unsatisfactory and **HIS/HER** absences marked as unauthorised then I will have no option but to refer your case to Derbyshire County Council for consideration of legal action. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine per child.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to **£1000**.
- Prosecution under s444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to **£2500 and/or a community order or imprisonment**.

I will continue to monitor the situation but if **NAME's** attendance does not improve over the next **NUMBER** weeks, then legal action may follow. If you wish to talk to **ME/NAME**, TITLE regarding this issue or you require any support please do not hesitate to contact **ME/HIM/HER** on the number at the top of this page.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Dear

Re: Unsatisfactory Attendance at NAME School
England average attendance %; NAME'S attendance %

I am writing to you about **NAME'S** education. **HIS/HER** attendance record at **NAME** School is unsatisfactory with some absences unauthorised. As you know, it is a parent's responsibility to make sure their children receive a regular education.

Unless there is a significant improvement in **NAME'S** attendance over the next **NUMBER** school days, I will ask Derbyshire County Council to issue you with a Penalty Notice.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by S23.1 Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) a fine of one hundred and twenty pounds (£120) payable within twenty-eight days, reduced to sixty pounds (£60) if paid within twenty-one days, can be imposed for this offence. Failure to pay will result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If **NAME** has any absence over the next **NUMBER** school days, as a result of a medical condition or medical appointments which could not be made out of school time please provide evidence that this is the case. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or, if your child is under the hospital, a letter from their consultant. This evidence must relate to the absences taken during monitoring period stated above.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Wellbeing Team on the telephone number in the footer of this letter should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Head Teacher

Appendix C – template letter 5

Dear

As you know, **NAME**'s attendance has been an ongoing concern and **HE/SHE** is in the category of persistent absentee.

Unfortunately, despite previous legal intervention and offers of support, **NAME** has continued to miss school without good reason and **HIS/HER** absences remain unauthorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly then their parent is guilty of an offence.

Consequently, I intend to forward your case to the Local Authority for consideration of legal proceedings against you.

Please contact the Wellbeing Team on the telephone number at the head of this letter, if you wish further clarification on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Term Time Leave of Absence Request Form

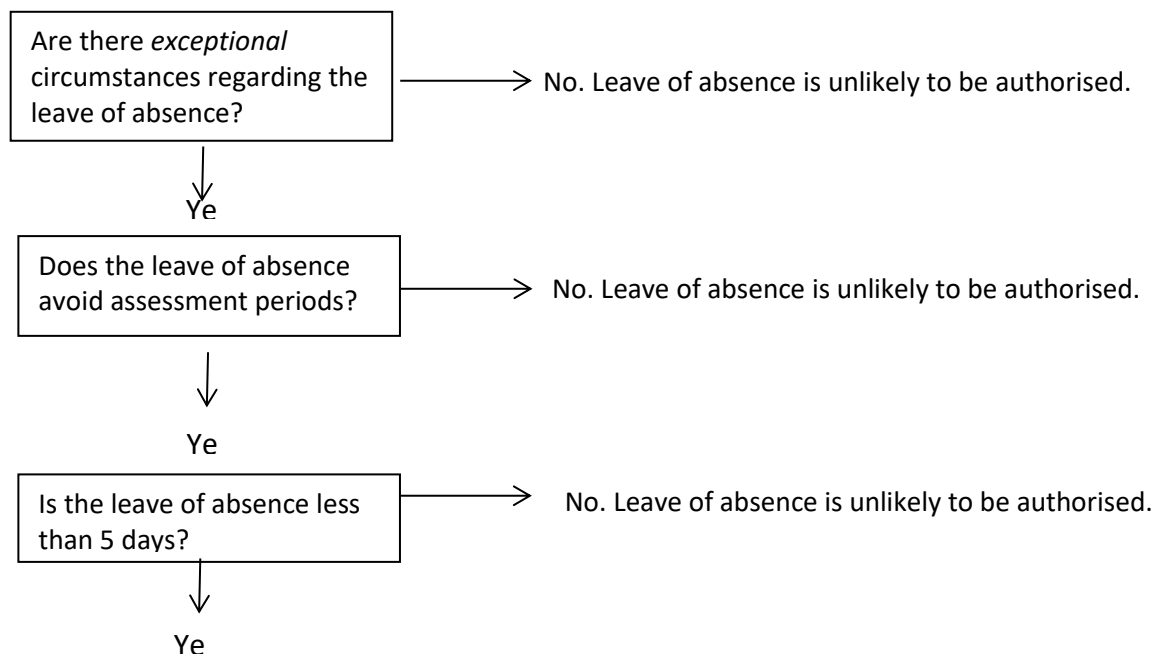


Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. St Mary's Catholic Primary School expects all parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school whenever possible. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a pupil's academic attainment.

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are one off events which are unavoidable; examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/introduction/made>

Parents who take their children on unauthorized holidays or who fail to return their child on the agreed date could result in a Penalty Fine being issued by Derbyshire County Council. Derbyshire County Council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if you do not pay within 21 days. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to at least two weeks before the intended leave. (This does not apply for requests for leave of absence for funerals.)



READ THE CONSIDERATIONS DETAILED BELOW AND IF YOU STILL WISH TO TAKE YOUR CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL, COMPLETE LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM AT LEAST 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO LEAVE REQUEST DATE AND AWAIT DECISION.

Consideration will be given to previous attendance and previous absence requests. All decisions are made in the best interests of the education of the children. Where absences are unauthorised, penalty notices may be issued.

1. Surely missing a few days can't make that much difference. Can't they just catch up when they get back?

Unfortunately not, and time out of school WILL make a difference. The curriculum is carefully planned for progression so that new skills and knowledge build on prior learning. If children miss out on parts of this then they will have gaps in their learning and find it difficult to understand what's going on when they get back to school because the rest of the class will have moved on. There is no time in school to catch up on all those missed lessons because then they would just be missing other lessons.

2. We are happy to take work with us and do it while we are away.

This is still no replacement for the quality first teaching they would be missing out on in lessons. Learning takes place through skillful questioning from the teacher and the rich discussions that take place in the classroom. What children do in their books as independent work comes from this discussion and initial modelling from the teacher, making links to previous learning and key vocabulary. Without this input, children would find it difficult to complete anything of value that would enable them to keep up and make progress.

3. We need a holiday so that we can have some quality family time together.

Children are at school for 192 days per year. That gives 173 days for you to have family time together. Consider what message about the importance of education you are sending to your children by taking them out of school in term time.

If, after reading this you still wish to take your child out of school, please complete the following form:

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Term Time Leave of Absence Request Form

Pupil details:

Name	Class

I request permission for my child(ren) to be absent from school:

First Day of Absence:	Date of Return:	Total Number of School Days:

Reason for the request:

Family Funeral (or close friend of the family) 1 day/2 days depending on location	
Immediate Family wedding- 1/3 days depending on location	
Pupils participating in elite sporting events (e.g. representing county, regional, national teams)	
Religious observance	
Other extenuating circumstance (unavoidable and one-off).	

Please supply, in as much detail as possible, the reason for your request and why it constitutes exceptional circumstances. Please include the names of the adult(s) who will be with your child(ren) during their absence from school. You may continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Parent / Guardian Declaration

I have read and understood the information on leave of absence, unauthorised absences and penalty notices and I declare that the information I have provided is accurate. Signed (both parents if applicable):

Sign _____ date: _____ Sign _____ date: _____

Print name _____ Print name _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

CURRENT ATTENDANCE:	PREVIOUS ATTENDANCE:	PREVIOUS LEAVE:	AUTH/NOT AUTH: PENALTY:
SIBLING CHECK:	ENTERED ON REGISTER:	LETTER OR APP MESSAGE SENT:	COMMENTS: SIGNED/DATE: