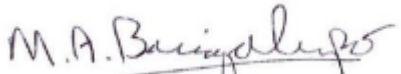




St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
Ysgol Gynradd Gatholig Y Santes Fair
 Milford Road, Newtown, Powys,
 SY16 2EH
Headteacher: S Ruggeri



Attendance Policy and Absence Procedures

Reviewed and approved by the Governing Body:	17 th February 2025
Next Review Date:	Spring Term 2026
Signed by Governor representative	

Policy History			
Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Review Date
22.10.2024	Front Cover – addition of Policy History	Headteacher	22.10.2024
17.02.2025	Addition of new guidance	Headteacher	17.02.2025

Our Vision:

“Love one another as I have loved you, then everyone will know that you are my disciples”. *John 13:34*

Our Mission Statement anchors our purposeful learning, so that valued in our uniqueness we nurture our skills and talents to our fullest potential. Our stimulating experiences promote our joy of learning as we thrive, growing in our self-belief,

happiness and independence. We inspire and motivate each other to strive for excellence in our increasingly digital world, as we become advocates for our ever-changing future. We develop our inclusivity and compassion for our global neighbours as we encourage each other in our responsibility to care for God’s world. Together, we build a stronger community through mutual respect of our differences and similarities, celebrating our home in Cymru and our place in the wider world as we

Listen, Laugh and Live in the Light of the Lord.

Rationale

St Mary's Catholic Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential to raising standards and pupil attainment. This policy underpins our school ethos in:

- promoting children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensuring that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- ensuring that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave our school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that the children at our school achieve the highest attendance record possible supporting the highest level of pupil achievement.

It is guided by the link between attendance and safeguarding, and emphasises that learners are seen, safe and heard. Our school will have an 'eyes on' approach for learners when there are attendance concerns and our policy is based on the principles embedded in *Belonging, Engaging and Participating*.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Attendance is the responsibility of all school stakeholders, but we have designated Sarah Ruggeri to have oversight of school attendance and processes

To achieve a pattern of regular attendance we have in place a series of actions including:

- Taking an attendance register twice a day
- Recording reasons given for absence
- Monitoring whole school attendance
- Reporting to parents / carers
- Setting individual pupil targets for improvement, bolstered by praise and rewards.

Understanding types of absence

We have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences, including an 'eyes on' approach to learners.

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents), 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 such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

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 and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend, we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

Persistent Absence & Severe Absence

A pupil is a 'persistent absentee' when they miss more than 10% attendance. Severe Absence is when attendance is below 50%. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached PA or is at risk of moving towards that it is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

Absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and tracking and monitoring attendance has a crucial safeguarding role. Absence can signal possible wellbeing issues or problems at home. Any PA pupils and their parents will be subject to additional support through the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.20 am by telephone or e-mail.
- Or call into school and report to the class teacher or the secretary.

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text the parent/carer on the first day of absence, if the above has not happened;
- Invite the parent/carer to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 87%.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare 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 unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt assemblies and lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage further absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect our children to be onsite by this time. The window for registration is **8.55am** until **9:05am**. If your child arrives between 9:05 and 9:20 they will receive a late mark. At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the 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 they have an unauthorised absence. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Holidays in Term Time

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In deciding the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. We urge parents not to take holidays during school time. If this is unavoidable, parents may apply for **one** period of absence in a school year up to a maximum of 10 days.

We strongly recommend that parents gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking your holiday.

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- During assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the school's target of 95.6% for any individual or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

Parents/carers are informed of their child's attendance on a termly basis.

Through the school year, absences and punctuality are monitored to identify where improvements need to be made.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy based on data provided by the Head teacher and ensure that all necessary action is taken to achieve the desired result.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Target attendance for 2024-2025 is 95.6%