

SACRED HEART OF MARY GIRLS' SCHOOL



RELIGIOUS OF
THE SACRED
HEART OF MARY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy adopted	July 2023	
SLT Member Responsible	Miss B McConville	
To be reviewed	Annually	
Date agreed at Governors' meeting	July 2025	
Date of next review	July 2026	
Headteacher	Ms V Qurrey	Date: July 2025
Chair of Governors	Mrs T Knight	Date: July 2025

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Aims

The Education Act 1996 states that all pupils should attend school regularly and punctually. From September 2023 the Department for Education have implemented a national drive to improve attendance and punctuality.

 [Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf](#)

Having a good education will ensure **that each young person** has the best start in life and the best possible opportunities for their future.

We expect our pupils to attend every day and strive to maintain 100% attendance and punctuality to school. Attendance is at the heart of realising potential, with school and national statistics recognising the impact good levels of attendance have on overall attainment and achievement. Pupils will have more choices about further and higher education or employment due to their success.

Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. On the basis of equal opportunities, we will take measures to encourage regular and punctual attendance at school, and in all lessons. We believe our pupils have a right to education and to do this they require continuity and progression in their learning. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in order to achieve potential.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career, and as a school we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, pupils and relevant support agencies to resolve those problems as

quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

Every individual in a Catholic school has the entitlement to be treated with the love, respect and dignity that comes from being a child of God, with the face of Christ.

This policy has expectations for all that are rooted in these Gospel Values and conform to the teaching of the Catholic Church. The implementation of all school policies should demonstrate the importance of personal responsibility and the need for justice but also facilitate healing and reconciliation.

At this school, we work hard to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between all those within our school community. We do this with regard to the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

What does the law say about attending school?

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 States:

“The parent/s of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- a) to his age ability and aptitude and***
- b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”***

Expectations

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- A quality education
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality
- A clear and fully understood registration process, in accordance with statutory regulations

- Regular, accurate and efficient recording of attendance and punctuality
- Effective communication between the school and the home
- Speedy action on any problems identified
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend
- Intervention and support when there are persistent absences

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	2 Weeks	54 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	4 Weeks	114 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	6 Weeks	174 Lessons
80%	38 Days	72 Sessions	8 Weeks	228 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	10 Weeks	288 Lessons
70%	57 Days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks	342 Lessons
65%	67 Days	134 Sessions	13.5 Weeks	402 Lessons

We expect the following from all pupils:

- That they will attend school regularly
- That they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform their parents or a member of staff of any problem that may hinder them from attending school.
- That they will accept help, support and guidance when offered and deemed appropriate.

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To ensure their children attend school.
- To ensure that they contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend. The easiest way for parents to do this is via SchoolComms on the Gateway app or by telephoning school on 01708 222660 and choosing Option 1. Our Attendance Officer is the first contact regarding attendance.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school punctually and are well prepared for the school day. The school gates are shut at 8.40 am every morning. School starts at 8.45 am and afternoon registration is at 1.30 pm. School finishes at 3.15pm.
- To work cooperatively with the school and education authority to ensure that attendance and punctuality are treated as a priority.
- To contact the Attendance Officer to apply for or discuss any Leave of Absence .

We will encourage attendance in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of registers at the beginning of each session and at the start of each lesson.

- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of attendance in individual progress reports.
- Acknowledgement for 100% attendance in any one term.
- Targeting and working with pupils who have attendance problems.
- Holding Parent consultation meetings, for those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulties in school that impact upon attendance.
- Sending parents attendance and punctuality figures, as part of reporting data.
- Act upon parental, staff, and agency requests for support with attendance issues, in an appropriate and flexible manner.
- Introduce a reintegration plan for pupils returning after long term absence.
- Put in place preventative procedures wherever possible.
- Offer a range of interventions and support aimed at overcoming barriers to learning which may impact upon attendance.
- Appropriate liaison with external agencies.
- Regular contact with parents of pupils with a worrying pattern of attendance.
- Legal action will be taken with pupils who persistently show attendance and punctuality problems and fail to respond to initiatives to raise attendance or improve punctuality.

Punctuality

Minutes Late Per Day	Equal Days Absent (per Year)
5 Minutes Late	3.4 Days Absent
10 Minutes Late	6.9 Days Absent
15 Minutes Late	10.3 Days Absent
20 Minutes Late	13.8 Days Absent
30 Minutes Late	20.7 Days Absent

- Pupils who are late to school **will serve a 15 minute detention at lunchtime on the same day they are late**. If they arrive late to the detention, they will serve their 15 minutes from the point of arrival.
- After pupils have had **5 incidents of lateness**, pupils will serve a Head of Year detention on a Wednesday after school for 45 minutes.
- After **each set of 10 detentions to school and registration**, pupils will serve a Senior Staff detention on a Friday after school. If lateness to school persists, a pupil may be referred to the Schools Admission, Attendance and Inclusion Team.

TYPES OF ABSENCE

Authorised Absence:

Remember: Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. Parents cannot authorise the absence.

- Illness : If a pupil is off for 5 days or more due to illness then medical evidence must be provided. Without medical evidence the absences will be unauthorised.
- Unavoidable medical appointments when supported by official medical documentation. 6th form pupils must provide evidence of medical appointments during the school day.
- Recognised religious observance
- Funeral
- Traumatic event

An Explanation of Unauthorised Absence:

Truancy which includes:

- Unexplained absence [no contact/written communication from parents/carers]
- Being in school but not attending a lesson
- An unacceptable reason for absence is provided.
- School has previously informed the parent that absence will not be authorised without official medical documentation and none has been provided.

175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR					
175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments					
190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR					
0 days absence 190 days for education	10 days absence 180 Days of Education	19 days absence 171 Days of Education	29 days absence 161 Days of Education	38 days absence 152 Days of Education	47 days absence 143 Days of Education
100%	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%
Good Best chances of success		Worrying Less chance of success Makes it harder to make progress		Serious Concern Not fair on your child Court Action	

Responding to Non- Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner

- The Attendance Officer will contact home if we have had no contact about their absence. Parents will be sent a message after 9.30 am informing them that their daughter is not in school.

This will be completed initially via SchoolComms to:

1. Make parents aware that the pupil is absent.
2. Ask for an explanation for absence.
3. Log parental responses in order to determine appropriate registration coding.

- If we do not get a response, then the Attendance Officer will call parent/carers
- If an acceptable reason for absence is not provided the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
- The Attendance Officer will follow up where there are unexplained absences.
- Form tutors may have an informal well-being conversation when attendance starts falling below the school target.
- Heads of Year will monitor attendance on a regular basis and will make contact when pupils are persistently absent; the government deem anyone under 90% as a persistent absentee.
- At different points in the school calendar parents will be informed of their child's attendance which is below the school target. This will happen after October half-term, after February half-term and towards the end of the summer term.
- Where your child's attendance falls below 90% a letter will invite you to contact the Head of Year to discuss strategies to improve your daughter's attendance and put in any required support. If attendance does not improve after this, your child may be referred to the Schools Admission, Attendance and Inclusion Team who will write to you and may visit you at home.

Working in partnership with the School Admission, Attendance and Inclusion Team

Our Attendance Officer and AHT in charge of Pastoral work closely and regularly with LBH Schools Admission, Attendance and Inclusions Team who regularly audit our attendance figures and where persistent absent pupils can be referred. In the unlikely event of this happening, then parents/carers can expect to hear from a member of the team by letter and a home visit. In the first instance, the EWO will work with the parent and pupil to support improvement in attendance. Should attendance not improve, then a fine will be issued.

Fixed Penalty Notice

The Havering Code of Conduct (Penalty Notices) (England) determines that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly over a given period, the parent/parents/carers may be subject to a fixed penalty notice. The notice is a £60.00 fine for each child and imposed on each parent/carers, if paid within 21 days. If unpaid the fine rises to £120.00 and if this is not paid within 28 days the LA have a duty to prosecute for the offence.

Prosecution

The parental duties under S7 444 (1) and 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 states that: 'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive full time education, suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude' It is important for you to note that where a child or young person is failing to attend school on a regular basis, the Local Authority may take legal action against the parent/carers in the form of a fixed penalty fine (see note above) or/and a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If found guilty of this/these offences the penalty can be a fine of up to £2,500.00 and/or a custodial sentence of up to three months. If a parent/carers are being prosecuted under section 444 (1A) defendants are required to attend court as a custodial sentence may be imposed, if they fail to do so a warrant may be issued.

Reintegration

The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special individualised planning.

- The relevant Assistant Head, Pastoral in conjunction with the Head of Year will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be referred to the Head of Year as soon as possible.
- The return to school programme will be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate.
- Support will be arranged between the Head of Year, SENCO, and Form tutor (as appropriate).
- Parents will be involved and informed at each stage of the planned reintegration.
- All strategies will be fully logged and form part of the pupil's file on our safeguarding platform.
- Staff will be notified of the return of long-term absentees via staff briefing sessions, school bulletin and emails.

6th Form Attendance: It is imperative that pupils in the 6th form strive for 100% attendance and punctuality to ensure that they achieve to the best of their ability.

Attendance to the 6th form is monitored closely and action is taken where it causes concern (falls below the school target). Form tutors will speak to pupils when attendance starts to drop.

The Attendance Officer will contact all parents if their child has not arrived at school after 9.30 am.

Pupils in the 6th form are expected to provide evidence from their parents to cover absences or a medical note to cover longer term medical absences. This can be done via SchoolComms or by calling the school on 01708 222660. A text message from a GP surgery, dentist surgery, hospital etc is also acceptable - this must be shown to the main office before leaving for an appointment.

Where a pupil's attendance falls below the school target they will receive a letter home at specific points in the year. If attendance does not improve the Head of Year will meet with the pupil and will monitor their attendance.

Should there be no improvement, then the Head of Sixth Form and the Head of Year will inform parents and a meeting may take place. Pupils will then be required to attend supervised study periods in the Sixth Form and they may also be put on report.

6th Form Punctuality: The punctuality to school, registration and to lessons in the 6th form is also monitored.

Form tutors will have a discussion with a pupil regarding their lateness in the first instance.

If lateness continues parents will be contacted. Pupils who are late **will serve a detention at lunchtime on the same day they are late**. If they arrive late to the detention, they will serve their 15 minutes from the point of arrival.

Pupils who are late three times in the same week will serve an extended late detention after school on Friday or Monday. Failure to attend will result in a Senior Staff detention.

After **each set of 10 detentions to school and registration**, pupils will serve a Senior Staff detention on a Friday after school.

Further support:

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/addressing-emotionally-based-school-avoidance/>

<https://www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/Page/20029>

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/addressing-emotionally-based-school-avoidance/>

<https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/>