

Promoting Excellent Attendance at St Marie's RC Primary School

This model policy is based on the DfE's ['Working together to improve attendance'](#) guidance (February 2024). The policy also references Ofsted's report (February 2022) ['Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence.'](#)

Approved by: Mr. G McRae (HT)

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Contents

Introduction	3 - 4
Expectations of pupils and parents	5
Daily routines	6
Reporting absence	7
Requesting leave of absence	8
Managing attendance	8 - 10
Voluntary support, formal support and statutory action	11 - 12
Fixed penalty notices	13
Appendix 1 Flow chart showing how schools, and local partners, work with families to improve attendance	14

1. Introduction

Statement of Intent

St. Marie's RC Primary School is an Outstanding school (as rated by Ofsted) and your son/daughter plays a vital role in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. School should be a happy and enjoyable experience for all students. It is a place where learning takes place, where friendships are formed and where social and educational skills are developed within a safe and secure environment.

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Pupils who fail to attend regularly experience educational and social disadvantage at school and their future life prospects can be impaired. They can also be at risk of drifting into anti-social and criminal behaviour. Pupil absence can also disrupt teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same classroom environment.

To ensure your child reaches his/her full potential it is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly and punctually, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

- 1.1 At St Marie's RC Primary School, we expect all pupils to:
 - Attend every school day
 - Attend school punctually
 - Attend school prepared for the day
- 1.2 We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.
- 1.3 We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.
- 1.4 Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach. Our approach is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (February 2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance' which applies from 19th August 2024.
- 1.5 This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and the 1996 Education Act.
- 1.6 Our approach to securing good attendance, in line with Ofsted's research, can be summarised as '*Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.*'

- 1.7 Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
- 1.8 In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – see [‘How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster’](#)
- 1.9 This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.
- 1.10 This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.

2 Expectations

- 2.1 It is our responsibility to maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems.
- 2.2 Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is Mr G McRae (Headteacher)
- 2.3 Other staff in school who support attendance on a day to day basis are Mrs D Barber (SBM) and Mrs A Ward (Admin officer)
- 2.4 Staff who can provide support on attendance are Mr G McRae and Mrs S Dandy (Pastoral HLTA)
- 2.5 Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.6 We are committed to working with parents to promote positive attendance. We expect all our **parents** to:
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
 - Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. This should be followed up with a written note as soon as possible
 - Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
 - Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
 - Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
 - Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- 2.7 We expect all our **pupils** to:
- Be aware of when they should attend school
 - Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn. Follow the St Marie's Way: *Be Kind, Be Careful and Be Determined*
 - Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
 - Communicate with parents/ carers to encourage a written explanation to be shared with school to explain any absence that has happened or is foreseen
 - Follow the school procedure if they arrive late

3 Daily routines

- 3.1 At St Marie's RC Primary School our Class teachers (EYFS/KS1) and Mrs S Dandy (KS2) meet and greet our pupils at their classroom doors (EYFS/KS1) and the KS2 playground (Y3/4/5/6). This begins at 8.35am each day. Pupils go directly to their classrooms at 8.35am when the school day begins.
- 3.2 Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.
- 3.3 Our school day begins at 8.35am. Any pupil arriving after 8.45am is required to enter via the main school office. The morning register will open at 8.35am and be taken by 8.50am.
- 3.4 If arrival is before 9.05am then the pupil will be recorded as late (Late **before** the close of register).
- 3.5 The school register will officially close at 9.05am. Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late **after** the close of register).
- 3.6 Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in further action being taken to support improved attendance.
- 3.7 Our afternoon session begins at 1pm with a register taken at 1.05pm and closed at 1.10pm.
- 3.8 Our normal school day ends at 3.05pm for all classes (Reception to Year Six)

4 Reporting Absence

4.1 If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school office (Mrs Barber/Mrs Ward-0161 764 3204) on the first day of absence providing a reason for the absence and the expected date of return.

4.2 If the absence continues, parents should contact the school office **each day of absence** to identify the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

Any child absent from 3 days or more medical evidence is requested in order to authorise days – this will be in the form of a medical appt card from doctors, hospital etc. Parents are asked to support school in this matter. This is in line with Education Welfare Officers advice (Attendance team.)

4.3 Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained, in writing, by no later than 5 school days after the session.

4.4 If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will:

- Activate first day calling procedures after the register is closed at 9.05am
- If there remains no contact then a further telephone call will be made later that morning to the parent and, if no response, a call will be made to the pupil's other emergency contacts. A message will also be sent out via the school's parenthub communication app
- If we cannot contact a parent and are concerned about the pupil then, a home visit may be carried out by a member of the school's SLT or the Headteacher. If the family is supported by a social worker then the social worker will be informed of the absence.

4.5 If we have concerns around a pupil's safety, we may also visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police.

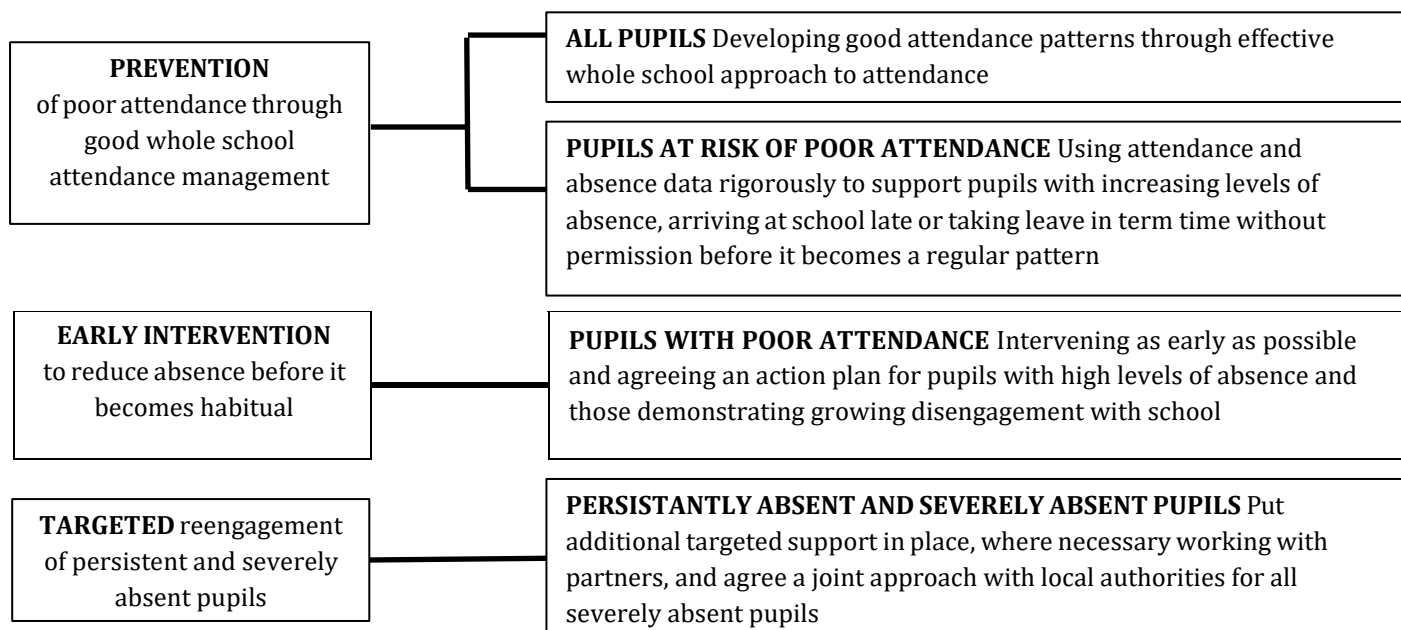
4.6 We will telephone home if a pupil leaves school without permission.

5. Requesting leave of absence

- 5.1 A leave of absence will only be granted (authorised) under very exceptional circumstances. It is therefore highly unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday or other absence. In making our decision we will take into account the specific circumstances and context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the head teacher giving as much notice as possible. A letter should be sent into school addressed to the Headteacher, Mr G McRae. Evidence of the event should be provided with the letter.

6 Managing Attendance

- 6.1 We will adopt a ABCD strategy as part of our attendance management
- A** = First day phone calls home
 - B** = Where attendance drops below 92% over a two -week period, a letter will be sent home alerting parents to this.
 - C**= If attendance does not improve, a meeting will be held with parents, class teachers and SLT/EWO and any further absences will require medical evidence.
 - D**= A further meeting will be held with Headteacher if needed.
- 6.2 We value and recognise the importance of good attendance. We use the following to promote and celebrate good attendance:
- The attendance of each class is recorded on the weekly newsletter*
- The class with the best attendance each week is awarded an extra playtime*
- At the end of the year, children with 100% attendance (taking into account specific medical conditions) receive a special badge and certificate.*
- 6.3 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable (see 6.4 below). We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.
- 6.4 Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absence or severely absent.



6.5 Our strategy for using data to target our work on attendance, including reducing **persistent absence** (pupils who are absent for 10% or more sessions/ attendance is 90% or below) and **severe absence** (pupils who are absent for 50% or more sessions is based on the table below:

0 – 4 days missed	98 – 100% attendance	PREVENTION Whole school approach/ celebrating good attendance	These children will be celebrated throughout the year and especially a the end of the year with 100% attendance certificates
5 – 9 days missed	95– 97.9% attendance	PREVENTION Pupils at risk of poor attendance	Our ABCD model will monitor these pupils and ensure that their attendance improves
10– 19 days missed	90.1 –94.9% attendance	EARLY INTERVENTION Pupils with poor attendance	Letters will be sent home for pupils below 92% attendance and we will follow our ABCD model
20 or more days missed	90% or below attendance	PERSISTENTLY ABSENT 90% or below SEVERELY ABSENT 50% or below	Parents of these pupils will be asked to attend meetings as per ur ABCD

6.6 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts of pupils that need support. We will focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.

6.7 If we have concerns about a pupil's attendance and/ or their punctuality then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time.

- 6.8 We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with us to identify the most appropriate support. Where relevant, the support would involve following the Emotionally Based School Avoidance pathway.
- 6.9 We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.
- 6.10 We will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable to discuss attendance at, and engagement with, school. This will include pupils who are classed as being persistently absent (90% and below attendance), those who are severely absent (50% and below attendance), those with patterns of absence and pupils who show an unexpected or unexplained dip in attendance.
- 6.11 Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support through the completion of the 'Story So Far' tool, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting.
- 6.12 We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- 6.13 If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.
- 6.14 If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures

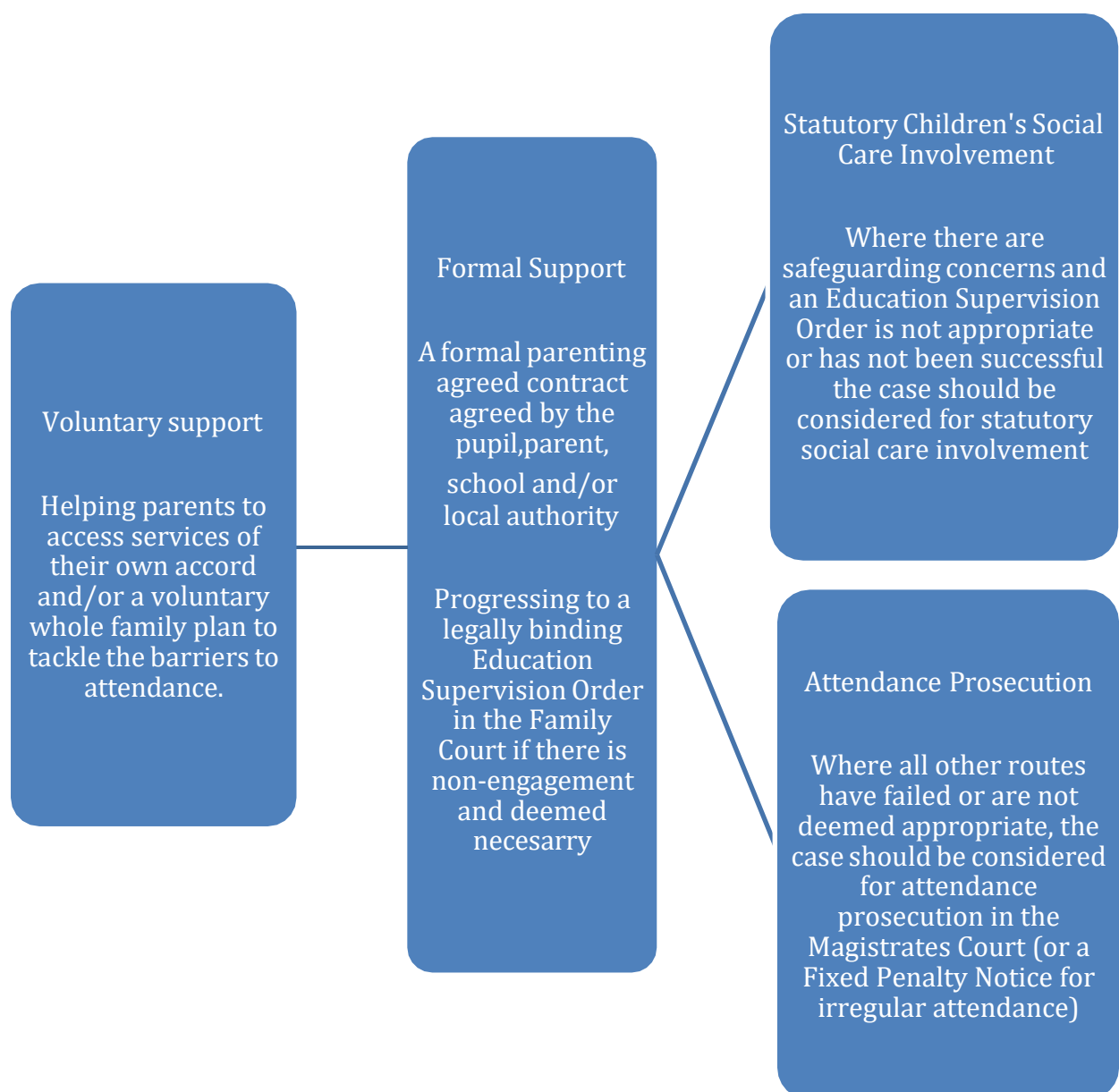
7. Voluntary support, formal support and statutory action

7.1 We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. These may include:

- A recognized whole school approach that celebrates achievement in school
- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Discussion with the Virtual School where the child is looked after and/ or has a social worker
- Working with attendance professionals, internal and/ or external to the school
- Attendance panels
- Attendance support plans
- Attendance report cards
- Attendance contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- Personal, social and health education
- Anxiety-based school avoidance resources
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Early help referral options
- Family learning
- Reward systems for positive behaviours
- Time limited part-time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion resources
- Reintegration support packages

7.2 Support offered to families, both internally and externally, will be child-centered, trauma informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

7.3 Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support. At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.



- 7.4 We will work with Bury local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right to an education. These are:
- Attendance contracts
 - Parenting contracts
 - Education supervision orders
 - Attendance prosecution
 - Parenting orders
 - Fixed penalty notices (see section 8)
- 7.5 Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family.

8 Fixed penalty notices

- 8.1 School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- 8.2 Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.
- 8.3 We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Working Together to Improve School Attendance National Framework (February 2024), where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holiday in term time.
- 8.4 Fixed penalty notices can be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

Note: This policy meets the requirements of the department for education's [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and referenced the statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties governing school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (and 2024 amendment)

This policy should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, our school's child protection and safeguarding policy and our school's behaviour policy

Appendix 1 Flow chart showing how schools, and local partners, work with families to improve attendance

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen, to understand barriers to attendance and to agree how all partners can work together to resolve them



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.