

St Matthew's RC High School

Attendance Policy



Reviewed: July 2017

To be reviewed: July 2019

We Pray, We Care, We Achieve

Key Rationale: St Matthew's RC High School is dedicated to promoting a distinctive Catholic ethos by upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church. This means that everything we aim to achieve will be based on the teachings and practice of the Catholic Church.

Our motto is "Quaerite primum regnum dei" - "Seek first the Kingdom of God" - and our aim is to achieve this motto in our school life. We will work to build God's Kingdom and be happy together because we believe that Jesus died and rose again for us and that He is always present in our school and in our world.

We are committed to developing the full potential of every individual, regardless of culture, race, religion, disability, or special need by creating a safe, orderly environment where all members of the community work diligently in a spirit of co-operation and treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times.

Our primary role is to educate children and we uphold the principle outlined in the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales (2000) that:

"Education is holy ... the process of teaching and learning is a holy act"

At St Matthew's we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and special educational needs. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

St Matthew's High School helps pupils to establish patterns of regular and punctual attendance. We ensure that responsibilities regarding attendance are made clear to parents and pupils. We make it clear that unauthorised absence is not tolerated.

We expect parents to telephone to tell us if their child is ill on the first day of absence, and then to write a short note to the Form Tutor when the pupil returns to school.

Absence from school during term time will only be authorised if there are exceptional personal circumstances.

We closely monitor the attendance of our pupils and identify any attendance concerns. Early intervention strategies are in place using appropriate measures to resolve attendance issues as soon as they arise. We are aware that absences may indicate a problem at school, home or both and act promptly to minimise impact on learning.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday and remains so until the end of the academic year in which they are 16. From September 2015 all 16 year olds will be required to remain in education of training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Key Personnel

The Governors:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence

- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The Leadership Team:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Use Manchester Local Authority's Early Help procedures to as a response to improve attendance and facilitate support for pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Deletions from the attendance register follow LA guidelines on 'Children Missing Education' and 'Removing a pupil from the Attendance register'
- The policy is reviewed and updated.

Progress Leaders ensure that:

- They are aware of the attendance issues within their Year group.
- In partnership with the relevant Pastoral Manager, they monitor the attendance figures once a fortnight.
- They encourage their tutor team to make phone calls or meet with parents, when necessary, to improve attendance.
- They attend Attendance Planning Meetings when necessary.
- The subject of attendance has a high profile be mentioning in assemblies, form briefings and all meetings and rewarding high attendance.
- Pupils on fixed term exclusion are supported by the provision of work
- Pupils with long term medical problems are identified and the necessary strategies are implemented.

Pastoral managers ensure that:

- They are aware of the attendance issues within relevant Year groups.
- Carry out follow up phone calls or home visits following a third day of absence (authorised or unauthorised)..
- In partnership with the relevant progress leader and the Assistant Head, they monitor the attendance figures once a fortnight.
- They attend Attendance Planning Meetings when necessary
- Use Manchester Local Authority's Early Help procedures to as a response to improve attendance and facilitate support for pupils and their families.
- Interventions used are documented to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- They support the progress leader with information for rewarding good attendance
- Pupils on fixed term exclusion are supported by the provision of work
- Pupils with long term medical problems are identified and the necessary strategies are implemented.
- He/she is available to answer any queries regarding attendance.
- He/she is available during the attendance 'sweeps' and 'swoops' to assist the Attendance Improvement Service.

Form Tutors ensure that:

- Daily registers are accurately taken for their tutor group within the agreed time frame.
- They share the weekly attendance reports and half termly attendance targets with pupils.
- They are alert to patterns of attendance during the school day and follow up any unexplained absence during the school day.
- They contact parents and intervene early on if they have concerns.
- They meet with parents, should the need arise, to discuss attendance concerns.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation

All teachers ensure that:

- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- They register the class accurately, within the first five minutes of a lesson on the school's information management system.
- They inform the administration team if a pupil is missing from their lesson.
- They inform the tutor if a pupil is missing from their lesson and liaise on the suitable follow up.

The Admin Team ensures that:

- Ensure that Groupcall is used to contact parents of pupils with unexplained absences at 10am each morning.
- First day absence calls are made home when absence continues to be unexplained.
- Register list for ill absent staff are produced for period 5.

- Ensure that all period 5 registers have been recorded either on e-portal or on paper
- Record all period 5 paper registers by 3.05pm
- Ensure that information received from parent/carers regarding attendance issues is recorded accurately and with the appropriate level of details.
- Assist with the standard documentation used by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

All pupils ensure that:

- They attend school on a regular basis unless they are ill, or have other authorised reasons for not attending school.

All parents ensure that they:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctor, dentist etc. outside of school hours and if this is not possible minimise the time their child is absent from school.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family

Links With Other Policies

- Anti-Bullying policy
- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding
- Special Needs Policy

Success Criteria For The Policy

- Reduced figures for authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Reduced numbers of pupils classified as persistent absentees
- Improved figures for overall attendance.