

St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Attendance for Children Policy



As a school we aim to:

- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of punctuality and regular school attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing by 9.30am on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return.
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school lunchtime breaks
- Bringing your child to school before and returning them after a hospital or other medical appointment
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

School shall take various measures in order to safeguard children by:

- Following up unexplained absences after registration, with a phone call on the first morning
- If we cannot make contact with named contacts to find out the cause of absence, representatives of the school may visit the home address in an attempt to make contact
- Reminding parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters
- Including each child's attendance rate in their annual school reports
- Acknowledging and rewarding good attendance
- Letting you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance
- If we continue to have concerns, make a referral to Local Authority or the MASH team as a safeguarding concern. A member of school staff may be involved to work with a family to improve attendance.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance. These absences still count in a child's overall absence percentage.

A 'Leave of Absence' form (obtainable from the school office) must be completed in advance of any planned absence.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are *not* permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- Parents are unwell - in such a case, please contact us, we may be able to assist in getting your child to school.
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Unapproved Holidays

Governors do not support such absences and such Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. Further information can be found at: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/information-for-parents/milton-keynes-council-school-attendance>

Persistent Absence

In line with government requirements, a pupil becomes a ‘persistent’ absentee when they miss 10% or more school across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we expect parents’ fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

If attendance drops below 90% warning letter will be issued and a Review Period 1 begins. For 25 school days from the start of the following school week, attendance is monitored. If attendance during Review Period 1 is rising significantly, the school will issue an ‘improvement in attendance’ letter and continue to monitor to ensure high attendance.

If there is no significant improvement during Review Period, a meeting will be held with the family to discuss the absence rate and how the school may support in increasing it. A GP stamp may be required for any child sickness. Then, a Review Period 2 will begin for 25 school days from the start of the following school week. If attendance during Review Period 2 is rising significantly, the school will issue an ‘improvement in attendance’ letter and continue to monitor to ensure high attendance.

If there is no significant improvement during Review Period 2, a meeting will be held with the family to discuss the absence rate and how the school may support further in increasing it. A pre-Fixed Penalty Notice or a Prosecution Warning Notice may be issued. The Milton Keynes Council Authorised Officer (the ‘MKAO’), currently the Senior Attendance Officer (Legal Interventions), will be contacted to support with legal interventions where relevant. A GP stamp may be required for any child sickness.

Then, a Review Period 3 will begin for 25 school days from the start of the following school week. If attendance during Review Period 3 is rising significantly, the school will issue an ‘improvement in attendance’ letter and continue to monitor to ensure high attendance. If there is no significant improvement during Review Period 3, the school may pursue, with the assistance of the MKAO, a Fixed Penalty Notice or Court Proceedings. This is the last resort for the school. Fixed Penalty Notices - £60 in the first instance rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. Court prosecution – up to £2500 fine and 3 months in prison.

For further information guidance on Milton Keynes Council's enforcement policy on school attendance, please see the [Enforcement Policies and Code of Conduct for the Issue of FPNs \(DOC, 104KB\)](#)

Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 8.55am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time. If a child is left at school and we are unable to contact a named adult, then we will contact the Milton Keynes Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice.

Procedure for lateness

- All children arriving after 8.55am must be accompanied to the school office by the parent /carer, where they will be asked to sign them in.
- Lateness is monitored regularly. Where children have persistent lateness problems, the Head or Deputy Headteacher will invite the parents into the school to a formal meeting. Periods of Review will be put in place in line with those as set out under the section Persistent Absence above. If your child is persistently late after the register the school can ask Milton Keynes Council to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Holidays and Term Time Leave of Absence

The school support the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils' miss as a result of family holidays.

There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Head Teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the Governing Body.

It is our policy:

- That only in exceptional circumstances will holidays be authorised and then only up to a maximum of 10 days. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application). Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it due to exceptional circumstances, taking into account factors including the nature of the event for which the leave is sought, the frequency of such requests and the amount of advance notice.
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance and before booking. Please ask the school office for a form. The Headteacher will consider your request and you will be informed of the decision. Time beyond that

authorised will be unauthorised with the related risk that your child may be removed from the school roll.

- No holiday requests will be granted for children in year 1, 2 and 6 during SAT's week and the Year 1 phonics screening check. These are statutory tests that your children must take. Notification of the date will be given to parents as early as possible in the academic year.
- If the school does not agree and you take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.

Guidance on The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (the 'Regulations') states that a school may only remove a child from their roll when a pupil:

- Registers at another school
- Is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Has been permanently excluded
- Fails to return after an extended family holiday*
- Has a medical condition prevents their return to the school
- Will be in custody for more than four months
- Has left the school but it is not known where they have gone*
- The school is replaced by another school on a school attendance order
- The pupil is above compulsory school age
- Death of the pupil

*Following efforts by both the school and the Local Authority to locate the pupil

Our school operates in accordance with the Regulations.

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

School outings / visits / residential trips.

Opportunities for children to attend these activities are provided. If they do not go, the children are expected in school where alternative arrangements will be made for them.

Governors will not authorise absence if the child does not attend school during this time, unless there is a valid medical reason (a bad cold is not acceptable) or medical certificate provided or there are exceptional family circumstances.

Medical Appointments

- For pre-organised hospital and medical appointments please provide a medical appointment card when informing the school office.
- For routine check-ups, dental appointments please make these outside of school hours.
- For non-emergency doctors' appointments, please make these appointments outside of school hours.

Procedures

- Registers of all classes are kept and monitored by staff daily

- Monitoring of registers is completed 6 weekly
- Logs are kept of children who arrive late
- Logs are kept of all children daily for whom no notification for absence has been made and of phone calls made
- Logs are kept of phone calls received from parents and reasons given.

Legal Note

For further information about school attendance and parental responsibility to send their child to school, please see this document.



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We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

“Every day counts...”