



St Mary's Catholic High School, Leyland



Attendance Policy

Autumn 2026

To be reviewed Spring 2028

STATEMENT OF INTENT

St Mary's Catholic High School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Mr A. McCann, and can be contacted via a.mccann@ismchs.com.

Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance, or communicate via Arbor.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CODES 2026

At St Mary's we believe there is no limit to any pupils potential but recognise that this can only be achieved by excellent attendance. Attending school every day is essential to ensuring your son/daughter is to make the most of their ability and does well at school.



Research from the Department for Education found that for secondary school students with full attendance, they were 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5 GCSE grades 9-4 than those who missed 15-20% of school.

Attendance is recorded as a percentage of how much time a student has attended school. Every session they are absent whether it is an illness, a medical appointment or an authorised/unauthorised absence has a detrimental effect on their overall attendance percentage.

100%	0 days Missed
95%	9 days of Absence. 1 week and 4 days of learning missed
90%	19 days of Absence. 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed
85%	28 days of Absence. 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed
80%	38 days of Absence. 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed
75%	46 days of Absence. 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed

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Parents and carers

St Mary's Catholic High School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

1. INTRODUCTION

St Mary's Catholic High School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance. We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance improvement manager is Mr A. McCann, and can be contacted via a.mccann@ismchs.com. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance, or via Arbor.

This is a successful school, and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to achieve their potential and aspire to excellence. For all pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and every pupil should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Absence or late arrival also disrupts daily routines and teaching and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are

better prepared for the transition to secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment.

It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and our attendance policy sets out how together we will achieve this. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently, and we will always consider the individual needs of pupils, and their families, who have specific barriers to attendance. We will also be mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and consider the UN (United Nations) Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our attendance target this year is 98%, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

Our school aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

1. Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
2. Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
3. Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
4. Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled too
5. Acting early to address patterns of absence
6. Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attends regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The minimum expectation for attendance is 98%. Absence below 90% is classed as persistent absence and parents could be at risk of prosecution. 90% Attendance over 1 school year is a total of 4 weeks missed learning or 120 lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern 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 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Information from the Local authority:

If any pupil was to miss 5 days of their education through an unauthorised holiday, there is a high possibility that a fine could be endorsed by Lancashire County Council. Penalty notices will be charged at a rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days. A reduce rate cannot be offered for a second 5-day absence.

If you have previously received two penalty notices for the same offence within a rolling 3-year period, the Local Authority cannot by law issue a further penalty notice and will therefore consider prosecution.

Prosecution will also be considered for unauthorised leave of 15 school days or more as this is deemed an excessive amount of time out of school.

1.1 FAMILIES

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly, if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school (see the appendix for details of how the law applies to school attendance and how "parent" is defined in law).

Parents and pupils should know the times the school day starts and finishes and when the register closes (see section 4, below), the processes for requesting leave (see section 3.4), and the process for informing school of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform school as soon as possible and at the latest by 8.30 am on the first day of absence via Arbor or by calling school on [01772 421909].

Parents must also ensure that school has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts.

Pupils' responsibilities depend upon their age, maturity and capability but they too must do their best to attend school regularly and punctually.

Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the relevant person in school this may be the attendance team or pastoral team this can be via the school contact number 01772 421909 or staff email addresses.

School contact information for attendance-related matters is given below at the end of section 2.2.

1.2 SCHOOL

Head Teacher

- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to statutory requirements regarding

attendance.

- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some, all, or none of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there is uncertainty regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence, or to request further evidence to support the decision-making process

Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

Designated Senior Leader known as the Senior Attendance Champion

- Take overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school, liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed.
- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Have a comprehensive understanding of attendance data.
- Use attendance data to target attendance improvement efforts and support to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents.
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

Other staff with designated responsibilities for attendance (These are some named staff: Attendance Improvement Manager, Pastoral Staff and Office Staff, but all staff have designated responsibilities as it is everyone's responsibility)

- First day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accordingly. Contact emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached.
- Update attendance registers.
- Regularly monitor and analyse data to identify pupil, class and whole school attendance concerns and to target attendance improvement support for those who need it most, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Discuss attendance concerns at an early stage with pupils and parents.
- Work with pupils and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using attendance contracts where appropriate.
- Involve external agencies to support pupils and parents as appropriate to better understand and address the issues causing attendance concerns.
- Promote regular attendance through the school newsletter, website and displays and ensure the school's attendance policy is readily accessible.
- Use projects and strategies to improve attendance and punctuality for groups, classes or the whole school (eg incentive and reward schemes, certificates, traffic light letters).

All school staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for pupils and a safe learning environment, particularly for those returning to school following a period of absence.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise that absence is a symptom of other issues impacting a pupil's welfare and can be a warning sign of safeguarding concerns.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to pupils and parents.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the head teacher.
- Raise any concerns about attendance with the Senior Attendance Champion and/or Attendance Improvement Manager
- Class Teachers and Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see new codes from July 2026, all of these codes will not be accessible to all staff), and submitting this information to Arbor by 8.50am on the morning and 12.25pm in the afternoon. All staff are expected to record registers accurately and for each lesson, staff will receive emails and have conversations about missed registers and could face further action from the Headteacher should staff miss registers on 3 occasions or more.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with The Working Together for School Attendance, July 2026
- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually or more frequently if required.
- Agree targets for attendance at St Marys.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of school's attendance procedures.
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the head teacher in establishing equitable and consistent criteria against which leave requests will be considered.

Link Governor, to elect and have one identified link governor who will provide feedback to the governing body on their roles around attendance but also on key information that they are aware of which are highlighted below:

- Promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Understand, promote and review the attendance and behaviour policy to ensure it is understood by all, reviewed regularly, consulted on and disseminated
- Ensure the school has a clear policy on attendance and promote it within the school community
- Work with key personnel at school to set, maintain and review attendance targets at different levels (e.g., by pupil or year group)
- Work with and support all staff with any attendance issues that arise
- Ensure clear systems are in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are off site
- Ensure the Governing body is aware of the attendance levels and the level of persistent absence in school
- Ensure Governors are familiar with their schools agreed attendance target and should monitor the progress the school is making towards it

Schools are bound by a range of attendance legislation, regulations and guidance; please see the appendix for further details.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time and attend every timetabled session, on time in school
- Follow the guidelines and attend school so attendance is on or over 96% and not drop below the PA figure of 90%.
- If on attendance contract agree too and ensure they follow the guidelines

School attendance contacts

- Contact for parents to notify school of a pupil's absence: via Arbor or ring 01772 421909.
- Contacts for day-to-day enquiries about attendance: form tutor, pastoral assistant or the attendance improvement manager via email.
- Support for specific and more serious attendance concerns: pastoral Leader, SENDCO, Senior attendance champion.
- Senior Attendance Champion, the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school: Mrs G Reader, Assistant Headteacher.
- The staff named above can be contacted on 01772 421909.

1.3 LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (THE LOCAL AUTHORITY)

School Attendance Support Team

Each school has a named contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can advise schools on attendance related matters, and with whom Targeting Support Meetings will be held. St Marys named contact is Clare Lawson.

School Attendance Legal Team (SALT)

Following requests from schools for legal interventions when parents fail to ensure their children attend regularly, the School Attendance Legal Team undertakes enforcement processes, including penalty notices, prosecutions, parenting orders, education supervision orders and school attendance orders.

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

The Children Missing Education Team ensures the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to identify children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For further information see section 7, below, regarding notifications schools must submit.

3. TYPES OF ABSENCES

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence.

3.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes or exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or justifiable. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed and without a legitimate reason (see section 4.2).
- Days off for shopping, birthdays or looking after other children.
- Day trips and other leave in term time which have not been agreed by the head teacher.
- Days that exceed an amount of leave agreed by the head teacher.
- All holidays taken in term-time.

It is the head teacher's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised and, if there is any uncertainty relating to an absence, school may request further confirmation from parents before an absence is authorised. For absence due to illness, this may be in the form of:

- Sight of an appointment for your GP or for the hospital, clinic, etc.
- Sight of prescribed medication or prescription for medication.
- Sight of medical notes/records.
- A letter from a medical professional such as a specialist or consultant.

Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

GP's cannot legally sign pupils off school. Only a consultant is authorised to do this under medical reasons.

Information from the Local authority:

If any pupil was to miss 5 days of their education through an unauthorised holiday, there is a high possibility that a fine could be endorsed by Lancashire County Council. Penalty notices will be charged at a rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days. A reduce rate cannot be offered for a second 5-day absence.

If you have previously received two penalty notices for the same offence within a rolling 3-year period, the Local Authority cannot by law issue a further penalty notice and will therefore consider prosecution.

Prosecution will also be considered for unauthorised leave of 15 school days or more as this is deemed an excessive amount of time out of school.

3.3 Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA)

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, suspension, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any pupil's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

At St Marys we monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly. Pupils who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and the attendance procedures below (section 5) will be followed.

Particular focus will be given by all stakeholders to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These **severely absent** pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support. At St Marys we will endeavour to work alongside all relevant agencies to support these pupils in engaging them with education and complete a support plan. Family Help will be offered, alongside identifying potential educational pathways, including alternative provision and Section 19.

3.3a Leave during term time

By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested that involves arranging travel or accommodation, approval must be obtained from the head teacher before making any bookings.

Leave of absence in term time **will not** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides (using the form available on the school website or from the school office), **and**
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.

Due to the need to evidence exceptional circumstances, parents are advised to provide school with any relevant information regarding their request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional.

In considering the request school will also consider other factors such as:

- The timing of the requested leave, e.g. when a pupil is just starting at school or during assessment periods.
- A pupil's attendance record already includes unauthorised absence.

- Attendance is already a concern, or could become a concern, as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract legal sanctions such as a penalty notice.

Information from the Local authority:

If any pupil was to miss 5 days of their education through an unauthorised holiday, there is a high possibility that a fine could be endorsed by Lancashire County Council. Penalty notices will be charged at a rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days. A reduce rate cannot be offered for a second 5-day absence.

If you have previously received two penalty notices for the same offence within a rolling 3-year period, the Local Authority cannot by law issue a further penalty notice and will therefore consider prosecution.

Prosecution will also be considered for unauthorised leave of 15 school days or more as this is deemed an excessive amount of time out of school.

In certain circumstances, as outlined in regulation, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if leave is taken and the criteria governing removal from roll are met (see appendix).

3.4 Religious absence

School will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, eg Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if the head teacher agrees that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as code C.

3.5 Participation in sporting events

Parents can request leave of absence for their child to take part in regional, national and international sporting events. However, as always, granting leave is at the head teacher's discretion and she/he will need to discuss with you the length and frequency of the absence(s) requested and how learning will continue if absence occurs, e.g. the sports club or association providing an approved education tutor.

Leave for a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school can be marked in the register as code P.

Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late in order to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the head teacher and is unlikely to be approved if it would occur regularly.

3.6 Participation in performances (e.g. theatre, television, modelling)

Parents of a child performer can request leave from school for their child to take part in a performance. A local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Before a licence is granted, school will be consulted and head teachers must be satisfied that the leave will not have a negative effect on the child's education.

Where the licence specifies the dates that the child is to be away from school, the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the licence does not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise the leave request. Any absence authorised for the child to take part in a performance will be recorded as code C1.

Parents wishing to apply for a performance licence should go to the Lancashire County Council [Child performance licences webpage](#).

4. REGISTRATION

4.1 Attendance registration

Morning registration is between 8.45am and 9.05am. Afternoon registration is between 12.25pm and 12.40pm.

The school day starts at 8.40am. Pupils are expected to be on the premises at that time and that is when the registration period starts (ie when the register is taken and remains open).

When the attendance register has been taken it remains open until 9.05am in the morning and 12.40pm in the afternoon.

School finishes at 3.00pm.

4.2 Late arrival

Pupils who arrive after 8.45am (or 12.40pm) must go straight to the school office at the main entrance to sign in and give a reason for their lateness.

Pupils who arrive after the register has been taken (8.45am or 12.25pm) but before it is closed (9.15am or 12.40pm), will be marked as code L. This is classed as late but present for the session (ie the morning or afternoon). All pupils who arrive late, L, will complete a lunchtime detention on the same day.

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and without a valid reason for being late (such as attending a dental or medical appointment) will be marked as code U, which is classed as an unauthorised absence but indicates that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.

4.3 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important news and information for the day. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

All pupils who are late to school will be consequence with a lunchtime detention the same day.

If your child is often late you will be asked to meet with the pastoral leader and/or a member of the attendance team to discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in further action, as outlined below, under section 5.

5. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

5.1 First day of absence

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts and, if necessary, make a home visit. Please note that such home visits may be unannounced.

5.2 Attendance concerns

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together; this is nearly always successful. However, if concerns persist or absences are unexplained, school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

- Telephone calls and/or letters to make parents aware of school's concern about their child's attendance.
- When there is uncertainty about the reason for absence, school may ask parents to provide appropriate evidence and/or undertake home visits to ascertain where a child is and to ensure they are safe.
- Invitation to meetings to discuss concerns with the attendance improvement manager / class teacher / form tutor / pastoral staff or senior attendance champion.
- Attendance contracts to identify barriers to regular attendance, ways to overcome these and agree targets for improvement.
- Incentive and reward schemes for individual pupils, if appropriate.
- The Family Help Assessment (FHA) process and/or referral to other agencies and services, including School Nurses and Primary Mental Health Workers, if appropriate.
- For unauthorised absences, request legal interventions by the local authority, such as penalty notices, prosecution or other attendance-related court orders.

At any stage, we may seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team.

5.3 Pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Government guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (see appendix) emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is short or long term.

School will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of reasonable adjustments, specific support or resources used within school, or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this should always be done via the use of a direction (please see section 6, below).

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the attendance team / class teacher / form tutor / pastoral staff and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

5.4 Pupils refusing to attend school

At St Marys, we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education, and we would not accept "school refusal" as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school. We may request advice from the School Attendance Support Team and, with consent, make referrals to other external partners such as the Children and Family Wellbeing Service or Primary Mental Health Workers, as appropriate, to try to ensure the correct support is secured for the child and their family.

5.5 Promotion of good attendance

School will promote and incentivise attendance by acknowledging and rewarding good attendance by all pupils and efforts to improve attendance by individual pupils who have additional needs or challenging circumstances. Merits will be issued weekly by form tutors for excellent attendance and punctuality. Attendance reward assemblies will also take place.

5.6 Use of penalty notices and other attendance legal interventions

Legal interventions may be sought if providing support to improve attendance is not appropriate (eg for an unauthorised holiday in term time), or has not been successful or engaged with. In accordance with the Lancashire code of conduct, we may request that the local authority issue penalty notices for unauthorised absences that include:

- Leave of absence which is taken without a prior request being made.
- Leave taken after a request has been declined.
- Holidays taken in term-time.
- Days taken in excess of an agreed period of leave, without good reason.
- Other unauthorised absence that meets the required threshold, including sessions marked as late after the register has closed (code U).

Information from the Local authority:

If any pupil was to miss 5 days of their education through an unauthorised holiday, there is a high possibility that a fine could be endorsed by Lancashire County Council. Penalty notices will be charged at a rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days. A reduce rate cannot be offered for a second 5-day absence.

If you have previously received two penalty notices for the same offence within a rolling 3-year period, the Local Authority cannot by law issue a further penalty notice and will therefore consider prosecution.

Prosecution will also be considered for unauthorised leave of 15 school days or more as this is deemed an excessive amount of time out of school.

The code of conduct for penalty notices and information and FAQs for parents can be found on the Lancashire County Council [education penalty notice webpage](#).

6. ALTERNATIVE PROVISION AND USE OF DIRECTIONS

There is a range of circumstances when pupils might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their main school. The main reasons are:

- Pupils who have been permanently excluded or suspended for a period of more than 5 days.
- Pupils unable to access provision at their main school for medical reasons.
- Pupils required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour, either on a temporary basis or with a view to making a permanent move to the alternative provision (via a managed move).

When a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for the purposes of improving behaviour, the governors of the main school must issue a written direction or notice informing all parents of the alternative provision which their child is required to attend. Where a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for other reasons, the issuing of a written direction is considered best practice.

7. NOTIFICATIONS SCHOOL MUST SUBMIT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

7.1 Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's year, unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided (currently Lancashire does not).

7.2 Leavers

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the

pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided (Lancashire currently does not).

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the required information as laid out in the regulation.

In addition to submitting a notification about removal from roll, some circumstances also require school to make referral to other local authority teams such as the Elective Home Education team or the Children Missing Education team. Schools may also contact the School Attendance Support Team for advice on removing children from roll. For pupils with an EHCP on roll at a special school, the school must have the agreement of the Lancashire Inclusion Service (SEND) before removing from roll.

7.3 Pupils who fail to attend

All schools (including academies) must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. In Lancashire schools, this can be done via a variety of means and school can contact the School Attendance Support Team for further advice.

7.4 Pupils on a part-time timetable

Schools must also inform the local authority when a pupil is placed on a part-time timetable. In Lancashire, this should be done via the appropriate form available to schools.

7.5 Children missing education (CME)

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not on roll at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure they receive a full-time education.

If a pupil has stopped attending and her or his location is unknown, schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register. In such cases, school should undertake a home visit, prior to a referral being made to the local authority Children Missing Education team.

APPENDIX

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this attendance policy but is not exhaustive. Some elements of government regulations and DfE guidance do not apply to academies and independent schools (but may apply to independent special schools).

Parents and carers

Duty to ensure children receive education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 covers the duty of parents to secure the education of children in their care who are of compulsory school age and states:

The parent 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.

Offence if a child does not attend regularly

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, their parent is guilty of an offence.

The offence is absolute as the only defences available to the parent are those statutory defences listed within that section of the Act, ie:

- the child was absent with leave granted by the school;
- the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause;
- absence was on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parent belongs;
- that the school is not within statutory walking distance and that the local education authority has made no suitable transport arrangements or enabled the pupil to become registered at an alternative nearer school.

Compulsory school age

Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 establishes that a child becomes of compulsory school age on the start date of the term following her/his fifth birthday, or that day if her/his fifth birthday falls on the day term starts.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 16 or if he/she reaches 16 after the last Friday in June but before the start of the new school year.

Legal definition of "parent" in relation to attendance

The law requires that all "parents" are held responsible for their child's attendance.

This definition can include any person who has care of the child. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states:

Meaning of “parent”.

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—

(a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or

(b) who has care of him.

Thus, the definition of “parent” means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

SCHOOLS

Attendance and absence registration codes

Working together to improve school attendance, DfE statutory guidance 2024, explains which codes schools should use to record attendance and absence in their registers, and specifies the DfE's expectations of schools and local authorities with respect to school attendance.

Data protection

Schools must ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. See St Marys Privacy Notice for information about how personal data will be used.

Duty for schools to include attendance information in reports for parents

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005

Duty for schools to notify the local authority when pupils join or leave school

Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Duty for schools to report attendance concerns about individual pupils to the local authority

Regulation 13 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Duty for schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Keeping children safe in education, DfE statutory guidance, regularly updated

Duty for schools to share attendance data with the Government

Section 537A of the Education Act 1996 and

Share your daily school attendance, DfE guidance 2024

Leave of absence

Regulation 11 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Legal interventions

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child who is on a school roll fails to attend regularly and those absences are recorded by the school as unauthorised.

Legal interventions are available under the following acts, guidance and regulations:

- [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- [Section 36 of the Children Act 1989](#)
- [Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#), DfE guidance 2015

Pupils experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#), DfE 2023

Pupils with health needs who cannot attend school

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#), DfE statutory guidance 2023

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#), DfE statutory guidance 2015

Pupils with individual needs and specific barriers to attendance

When considering the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance, schools should be mindful of their obligations under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). The [Technical Guidance for Schools in England](#), published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, outlines the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for schools.

Regulations regarding participation in performances

[The Children \(Performances and Activities\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)

Regulations regarding removal from roll

[Regulation 9 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Regulations regarding the school day and number of sessions

[The Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(England\) Regulations 1999](#)

Requirement for mainstream, state-funded schools to deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours

[Length of the school week](#), DfE guidance 2023

Specialist and alternative provision settings are also encouraged to consider extending their core week where appropriate

APPENDIX 1: Understanding Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Code	Definition	Scenario
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Code	Definition	Scenario
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays