



# THE MARIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

*With God as our Guide we will value each other and work together to achieve our best*

## Pupils' Attendance Policy

Policy compiled by:	Headteacher
Responsible committee:	Resources
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### Our Mission Statement

*The Marist School is a place of teaching and learning:*

- *Where we promote the Christian growth of children in a caring environment.*
- *Where everyone is valued not just for what they do or give, but for who they are, a traveller on the way to Christ.*
- *Where children are encouraged and stimulated to achieve their full potential spiritually, academically and socially; where talents and successes are shared and celebrated.*
- *Where all staff work and grow together as a team, giving of their best and supporting each other.*
- *Where all members of the community are made to feel welcome and encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

**Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you."**

At The Marist Catholic Primary School every effort is made to create a caring, Christian family based on our Mission Statement, where everyone is valued. We believe children should respect themselves, each other and all adults within our community and God's world in which we live.

At The Marist Catholic Primary School we are committed to promoting the welfare of our children through regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on a child's attainment and overall progress in school.

We believe that school attendance is improved by the creation of an environment and ethos where our children feel safe and can build positive relationships with their peers.

To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection policies, behaviour policies and our Equality Plan, all of which seek to help create the caring environment in which our children can thrive.

## **2. OUR EXPECTATIONS**

### **2.1 Of Pupils**

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day; and
- feel able to discuss openly with their class teacher or other adult in the school any problems that deter them from attending school.

### **2.2 Of Parents and Carers**

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, fully prepared for the school day;
- ensure that holidays are not booked to be taken in term time;
- ensure that they follow in full the procedures for notification of absence as described in paragraph 11 below;
- keep their contact details up to date at all times; and
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs or circumstances arise that affect the child's behaviour, learning or attendance at school.

### **2.3 Of the School Staff**

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily.
- monitor every pupil's attendance and punctuality;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes and in circumstances of long term or frequent absence due to medical issues, verification from the doctor or other relevant body;

- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, a safe learning environment and a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the School's and the Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the School's Education Welfare Officer;
- meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

### **3. ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

At The Marist Catholic Primary School we seek to encourage good attendance by:

- Providing a positive, welcoming and supportive environment within the school and its classrooms;
- Informing parents, carers and pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality;
- Including information on attendance and punctuality in our School brochure for parents, in our weekly Newsletter, in our VLE and on our School website;
- Offering a consistent approach to attendance matters through the implementation of procedures to record and follow up pupils' absences and lateness;
- Praising and rewarding excellent and improved pupil attendance and punctuality.

### **4. REGISTRATION AND PUNCTUALITY**

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with the class teacher is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time.

- School opens at 8.40am and registration takes place at 8:55am.
- Pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school.
- If a child arrives at school after 9.00am they must sign in the late book at the School Office to ensure their presence on site is noted, particularly in case of a fire drill or emergency.
- Morning registration will officially close at 9:25am. If a pupil arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm for EYFS and KS1 pupils and 1.15pm for KS2 pupils.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken. This may involve contacting the appropriate authority outside the school.

The Attendance Officer will monitor lateness on a weekly basis and if a child is regularly late a letter will be sent to the parent/carer. If the child continues to be late, an appointment will be made with the parent/carer and Headteacher in order to agree a way forward. If

there is a negative response or little or no improvement after discussions about attendance or lateness, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

## 5. END OF SCHOOL DAY

The School day ends at 3:15pm each day and children should be collected promptly by a parent or carer at that time. If a parent/carer is delayed the child (if in Foundation stage or KS1) will remain in the classroom with the teacher until 3.25 and then taken to wait at the School Office. Children in Key Stage 2 wait on the playground with their teacher until 3.25 and will then be taken to wait at the school office.

No pupil may leave the School site at the end of the School day unless collected by their parent/carer except in the case of a Year 6 child whose parents have given written permission for their child to leave the school unaccompanied.

If someone other than the child's parent is collecting a child the School must be informed in writing of who is collecting the child.

## 6. TYPES OF ABSENCE

There are several types of absence:

**Persistent absence** - missing more than 15% of possible attendances in any one term. Levels of attendance falling below 90% will be regarded by the school as causing concern and will trigger school-based intervention.

**Intermittent absence** - missing days or half days in succeeding weeks, whether in a regular or irregular pattern, totalling a considerable number of absences over a half term or term.

**Absconding** - when a pupil leaves the school premises having been registered as present.

**Authorised** - the school approves the absence for a valid reason, for example, genuine illness or death in a family. Medical appointments should, if possible, be arranged outside the school day but where this is not possible it is expected pupils only miss part of the school day – these absences are generally authorised.

**Unauthorised** - the school does not approve the absence.

## 7. APPOINTMENTS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

To encourage good attendance, parents and carers should try, whenever possible, to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Requests for any unavoidable planned absences must be made in writing giving the reason for the planned absence, the time of leaving and of return. Children are not permitted to leave the premises without prior permission from the School and must be collected by parents or such persons as the parents have authorised the School in writing to release the child(ren) to. The parents or authorised adult must sign out the child(ren) on leaving the School and sign them back in upon their return.

Parents and carers should make every reasonable effort to bring the child in to School before an appointment and return them to the School after the appointment.

## **8. HOLIDAYS**

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons on their return. There is consequent risk of underachievement, which must be avoided.

The School holiday dates are published up to a year in advance and we expect parents and carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. Parents should not book a family holiday during term time.

Parents do not have the right to take their child for such a holiday and the school will not authorise such an absence. In exceptional circumstances where there is a serious domestic reason to take a child out of school, e.g. to attend a family funeral, permission should be sought from the Headteacher. Such a request must be made in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance of the requested dates as possible. The Head Teacher will then decide whether or not to authorise the absences.

Should unauthorised absence become a concern the Governors will be obliged to consider such absence as serious and with the Headteacher and EWO will consider all options including requesting the Local authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

In the event of a holiday taken in term time during SATs without the express agreement of the school, the Headteacher will immediately request the LA to issue a Penalty Notice.

## **9. PENALTY NOTICES ISSUED FOR NON-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

In law an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty notices supplement the sanctions currently available under Section 444 Education Act 1966 (prosecution of parents) or Section 36 The Children Act 1989 (Education Supervision Order) to enforce attendance at school where necessary.

A Penalty Notice may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. The issue of a Penalty Notice may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

1. Where pupils are identified on truancy patrols where no other legal proceedings are being considered.
2. Where parents/carers are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.
3. At the request of a Headteacher for instances of unauthorised holidays in term time.

The Local Authority will be responsible for deciding whether a Penalty Notice is issued and the Code of Conduct governing the procedures to be followed are set out in the 'Penalty Notices For Truancy' document. At the date of updating this policy, the amount payable on issue of a penalty notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in a summons being issued to appear at the Magistrates Court. Full details of the Code of Conduct governing the procedures to be followed are set out in the 'Penalty Notices For Truancy' document which can be requested from the school.

A child is a persistent absentee if their attendance is 85% or less.

## **10. CHANGING SCHOOLS**

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform The Marist Catholic School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next one.
- the address of the new school.
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and Form TO1 will be completed and sent to the Pupil Tracking Officer at County Hall. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

## **11. SCHOOL ORGANISATION**

It is vital that all members of the school community work together to instil good attendance and punctuality in pupils as a means of preparing them to be socially responsible and to facilitate learning, allowing all pupils to have equality of opportunity and achieve their potential. Therefore, in order for the School's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition, the School has the following responsibilities:

### **11.1 Head Teacher, Governors and Attendance Officer to:**

- adopt the whole policy; ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided.
- initiate a scheme for parents to contact the school on the first day of absence.
- ensure that key staff have timetabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWO and appropriate access to attendance data.
- consult and liaise closely with the EWO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay.

- work in close collaboration with the EWO during their termly/half termly register analysis.
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWO.
- Highlight and identify attendance in the yearly written report to parents.

### **11.2 Head Teacher/Deputy or Assistant Head Teacher to:**

- oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually.
- liaise with the Education Welfare Service regularly.
- reinforce good practice at year group meetings.
- share the class teacher's concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the EWO.

### **11.3 Class Teachers to:**

- complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily.
- follow up any unexplained non-attendance.
- record all reasons for absences in the register.
- inform the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher of concerns.
- be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

## **12. PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents/carers must contact the School on the first day of absence, to explain their child's absence, and when they anticipate their child will return to school. The school operates a dedicated absence line: 01932 339150 for this purpose. Otherwise an email can be sent to: [office@marist.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:office@marist.surrey.sch.uk)

If no contact is made before 9.30am, the Attendance Officer will attempt to contact the parent/carer by telephone.

If the child continues to be absent for more than a week the school will make an update check by phone or e-mail and the Headteacher will contact the parent/carer and consider if referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is appropriate.

Whenever the school is unable to contact a parent/carer because of inaccurate/outdated contact details the Attendance Officer will arrange a meeting to clarify details and school policy once the child has returned to school.

If absence is unexplained or unjustified, then it will remain unauthorised and lead to the necessary action being taken.

If a child is absent regularly or over an extended period; or there is a pattern to the absences; or if the school is unhappy with the reason given to explain absence, the Headteacher will contact the parent/carer and invite him/her to discuss the child's

attendance. This is a pre-referral meeting and failure to attend generates an automatic referral to the EWO.

### **Procedures for those having Parental Responsibility but not living in the children's home**

The School is required to maintain a list of names and addresses of those having parental responsibility. The law instructs us to make reasonable attempts to gather such information in the case of parents not living in the child's home. In order to do this, we may ask one parent to provide appropriate details of the other.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

*This policy will be reviewed annually, along with the effectiveness of the systems that are in place.*

*Policy reviewed and updated: February 2014.*

*Date of next review: Spring 2015.*

*Neil Lewin  
Headteacher*