

# ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

April 2019

Department for  
**Education**

### Popular questions

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

### **Are parents responsible for their child's attendance at school?**

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a proper full-time education. Parents are responsible for making this happen, either by registering the child at school or by making other arrangements which provide an effective education. See the Education Act 1996 Section 7.

Publication date: 14 May 2010

### **Can parents be sanctioned if their children do not attend school?**

Can parents be sanctioned if their children do not attend school? Yes. By law, parents of children of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not, they are committing an offence under

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Alternatively, parents can be issued with a penalty notice of £60 to £120 per parent per child. Head teachers and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) will continue to decide on the most appropriate response in individual cases.

## **School Attendance Matters - a parent's guide to good attendance.**

### **Why is regular school attendance so important for my child?**

Regular attendance at school means that your child can make the most of their education and improve their chances in adult life.

School can also help your child's social skills such as making and developing friendships. A regular and punctual attendance pattern will help your child when they enter the world of work.

**The link between attendance and attainment in school is clear. The more a pupil is in school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential.**

## **Attendance Policy**

English Martyrs attendance policy is intended to support parents and carers in helping their children make maximum progress in school. We are giving a clear, consistent message that "School Attendance Matters" and that high attendance is essential in order to meet the outcomes of Every Child Matters. We will follow similar guidelines so that families and young people have a clear, consistent message regarding:

- Absence and attendance codes
- Leave of absence
- Religious observance
- Medical Matters
- Lateness

### **Absence and attendance codes**

In order for us to identify trends, areas for concern and good practice across the BKCAT schools, it is essential that all schools are following common practice in the use of absence and attendance codes.

## **Leave of Absence (including term-time holidays)**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The government strongly urges parents/carers to **avoid** taking their children out of school for family holidays as this will disrupt their education. There is a common misconception that any child is allowed to take 10 days' holiday per year. This is simply not true. The Headteacher is under no obligation to authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances why this cannot be arranged out of school time. English Martyrs School cannot and will not authorise leave of absence unless the circumstances are exceptional.

A child who misses 2 weeks of school, misses 50 hours of lessons which is extremely difficult to catch up.

Any request should be made well in advance and in writing (a form is available from the school office). Requests for absence for reasons such as compassionate leave, special family events, sporting or musical competitions, etc., should be made in the same way.

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping for uniform, birthdays, day trips, weekends away etc.

All requests are considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request.

Other factors will be considered, such as:

- the time of year the student will be absent
- the attendance record of the student
- the number of previous requests for leave of absence
- the student's ability to catch up

Parents will be notified of the school's decision in writing.

Where a parental request has been refused, and parents continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. This is a fine of £60 per parent for each child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent for each child if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay can result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court. This legislation also applies if no prior application has been made or where a false reason for the absence has been provided.

In order to support parents who, wish to book family holidays, the school's term dates for this year and next will be published on our website as soon as they are available.

## **Religious observance**

We recognise the value of school attendance and of community cohesion. It is essential to take account of religious observance and the impact of its recognition on community cohesion when setting school holiday patterns

## **Punctuality**

Schools are legally required to take a register of pupils first thing in the morning and straight after Lunch. If a child arrives between between 8.50 and 9.10 they will be marked as L 'late' and after 9.10. the lateness will be recorded as a U for unauthorised lateness.

If a pupil is late but the register is still open, they are marked as late. If the register has already closed when a pupil arrives late and without a satisfactory explanation, it may be classed as an unauthorised absence. This may lead to legal action for not ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.

Punctuality is important because if, for example, a child arrives 15 minutes late at school each day, they lose almost 2 weeks of education a year.

## **Unauthorised absence**

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer. Only school 'can authorise' absence. The school will **not** assess all reasons as 'valid'.

We will **not** authorise absences for unacceptable reasons, such as:

- My brother/sister was ill
- It was my birthday
- We went to visit relatives

## **First Day Response**

In the event of your child being unable to attend school it is important that parents/carers inform the school office of the reason and intended length of absence via telephone, email or Group call by 9.30am.

If no reason is received for your child's absence, school will attempt to contact you via telephone and Groupcall, if no contact is made a home visit will be carried out. If school are concerned for the safety of the child this may lead to school requesting a Police welfare check or referral to Social Care Direct.

## **Support for Attendance**

We monitor every student's attendance and punctuality closely and follow up unexplained absence with parents/carers, by Group Call, telephone and/or by letter. Where a student's attendance record reaches a concerning level, we will contact parents/carers to discuss ways in which the school can support you and your child.

Where a student's attendance reaches a concerning level, we will contact you by letter, telephone, or home visit in the first instance to discuss ways in which we can work together to support you and your child.

If you have any concerns or are aware of any issues which may impact on your child's attendance, please contact our Safeguarding and Well-being Officer: Suzanne Kearford.

The school has a responsibility to work with families to address attendance concerns. Where a student's attendance continues to fall despite initial contact with parents/carers and the use of appropriate strategies and support to help improve attendance, the school may implement the Fast Track intervention with the support of the school's Educational Welfare Officer. Please note: This process is a positive measure to support parents/carers to fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of their child.

A meeting will be held in the school and parents/carers will be invited to attend. An action plan will be drawn up at this meeting and parents/carers will be sent a letter explaining the outcome of the meeting and possible consequences. Following a monitoring period, a review will be held and if insufficient improvement is made, the school will make a decision on the next steps. This could include a referral to the Education Welfare Service which may lead to parental prosecution, in some cases, the monitoring period may be extended for a further period of time. The Headteacher, Head of School, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer will offer support throughout this process. At this stage, discussions will take place with the Local Authority regarding any legal action. For further details regarding legal sanctions, please see the section below.

## **Legal Sanctions**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure their child attends school regularly. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence." The school can make a referral to the Local Authority where parents/carers are failing in their legal duty. The Local Authority has the power to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including the power to prosecute parents/carers who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If found guilty, parents/carers could be fined up to £2500 and/or imprisoned for 3 months.

Penalty notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly and are fines of £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Useful websites:

- <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>
- <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>
- <https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-children/supporting-families/education-welfare-service>

## **How can I help my child attend school regularly?**

- Talk to your child about school
- Take a positive interest in your child's work, including homework

- Make use of school planner
- Keep in touch with school staff
- Contact school on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend for whatever reason
- Attend parents' evenings and other school events

## **Children Missing from Education**

A child going missing from education, which includes within the school day, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect including sexual exploitation.

Unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line our attendance procedures.

### **We will:**

- Make an initial response (text message or telephone call) in the first instance
- Endeavour to make all reasonable enquires to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and the reason for absence. This may include a home visit by a member of staff.
- Contact with the school's EWO to help assist with our enquires and seek further advice
- Inform the local authority of any child removed from our admission register

Further advice and guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

## **What will happen if my child does not attend school regularly?**

The school should contact you in the first instance to raise concerns about your child's attendance. If they see no improvement, or there are particular difficulties involved, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

## **What if my child's school attendance does not improve?**

- If you continue to fail in your responsibility you may:
- Be included in the Fast Track System, which means you will be given 12 weeks to improve your child's attendance (see Fast Track Leaflet)

- Receive a Penalty Notice, which is a fine of £60 per parent/carer per child for truancy, holidays in term time or poor attendance/punctuality
- Be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court, which could result in you receiving a Community Order, a fine of up to £2500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence
- See your child issued with an Education Supervision Order, which would mean your child attending court and certain measures being put in place regarding attendance at school

### **How will regular school attendance help my child?**

School gives your child a wide range of opportunities and experiences in the form of academic lessons, educational trips and school clubs allowing them to develop their interests and achieve their full potential. Regular school attendance means that your child can make the most of their education.

### **School attendance awards**

Each week during our celebration assembly, each year group's attendance will be shared. The year groups who achieve 96% or above will be placed on a star on the attendance display in the hall. Once a year group has achieved 6 stars, the class receive a fun session of their choice. Previous rewards have included:

- Movie afternoon
- Fun in the gym on the apparatus
- Athletics
- Dancing to music
- Baking

In addition, the year group with the highest attendance per half term will receive £20 to spend on activity of their choice. Previous purchases have included:

- Butterflies
- Sewing Kit
- Games for the class

At the end of the academic year, attendance awards will be awarded for pupils who achieve 96% and above as well as an award for 100%.

There are two display used to celebrate our school attendance achievements. Attendance is promoted on the weekly newsletter, classroom windows for the

parents to see and on the website.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation of the Impact of the Policy**

English Martyrs school will:

- Analyse the data by code each term to identify trends and differences and act upon the findings, reporting to the Academy Council each term.
- Provide parents with attendance data
- Meet with the Educational Welfare Officer to discuss the patterns and reason of absence and term time holidays and follow up all attendance concerns

### **How can Education Welfare help?**

The Education Welfare Service can:

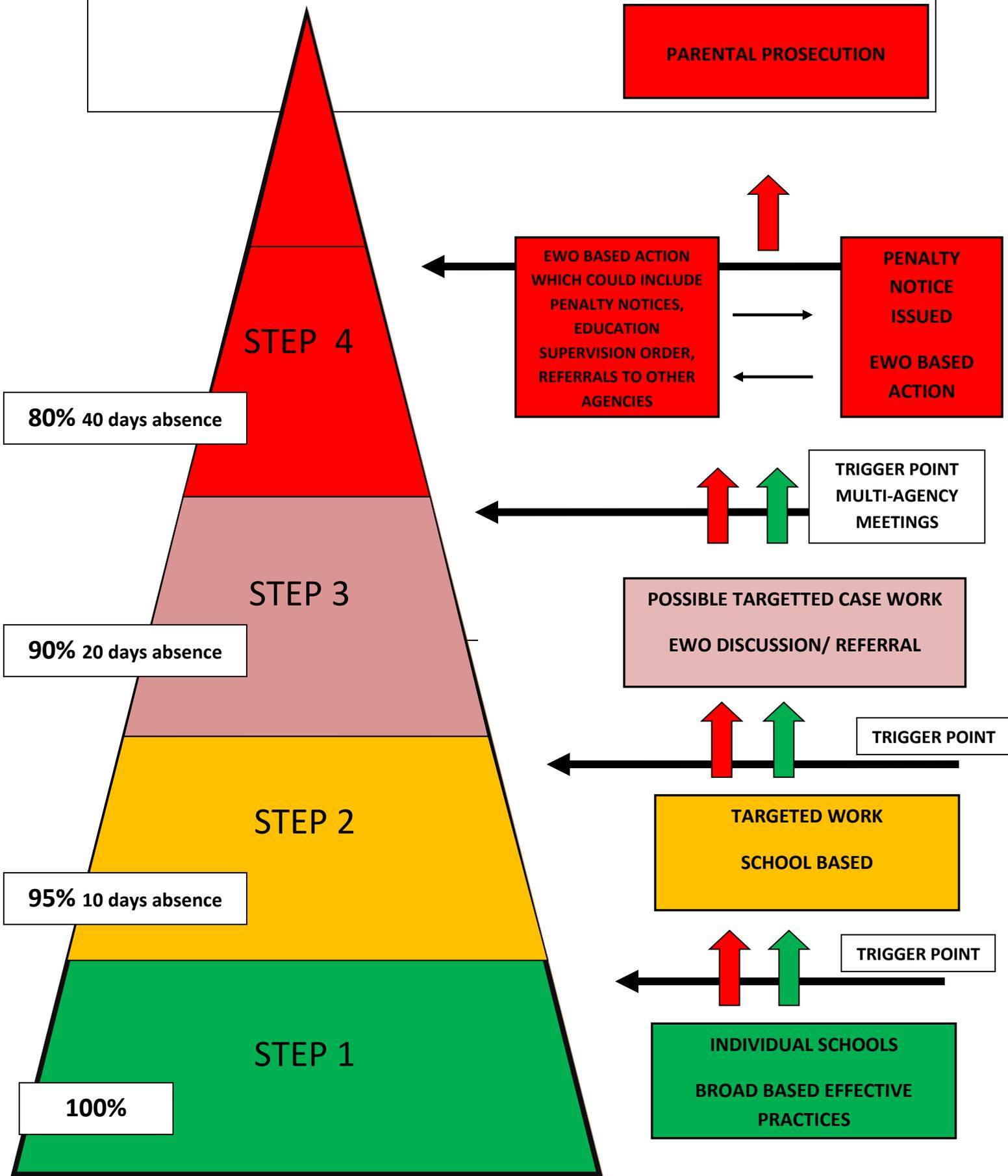
- Advise you on your rights and responsibilities regarding school attendance
- Visit you and your child in your home to discuss difficulties
- Liaise with school staff on your behalf
- Meet with your child in school if necessary
- Accompany you to meetings in school
- Suggest other agencies that may be able to help
- Provide information about school transfers
- Refer you to the exclusions officer if your child has been excluded
- Provide further information on the consequences of irregular school attendance

Signed on behalf of the school:

Clare Skinner  
Chair of the Rapid Improvement Group

Date: May 2019

# IMPROVING ATTENDANCE IN *Our Catholic Schools*



# IMPROVING ATTENDANCE IN *Wakefield Catholic Schools*

These figures apply to attendance data in primary schools

	% Attendance	Days Lost	
<b>OUTSTANDING</b>	100	0	
	99	2	
<b>GOOD</b>	98	4	
	97	6	
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>	96	8	
	95	10	2 SCHOOL WEEKS OF LOST LEARNING & £200 wasted
<b>UNSATISFACTORY</b>	94	12	
	93	14	
	92	16	
	91	18	
	90	20	4 SCHOOL WEEKS OF LOST LEARNING & £400 wasted
	89	22	
	88	24	
	87	26	
<b>TOTALLY</b>	86	28	
<b>UNACCEPTABLE</b>	85	30	
	84	32	
	83	34	
	82	36	
	81	38	
	80	40	1 (8WK) HALF TERM OF LOST OPPORTUNITY & £600 WASTED
	79	42	
	78	44	
	77	46	
	76	48	
<b>NEGLECT</b>	75	50	
	74	52	
	73	54	
	72	56	
	71	58	
	70	60	1 (12WK) TERM OF LOST OPPORTUNITY & £1200 WASTED

## Attendance percentages as missed days from school

Attendance %	Absence per week/fortnight	Absence per year	Absence over 5 years
95%	½ day Fortnightly	2 weeks	¼ year
90%	½ day weekly	4 weeks	½ year
85%	1 day Fortnightly	6 weeks	¾ year
80%	1 day weekly	8 weeks	1 year
75%	1 ½ days Fortnightly	10 weeks	1 ¼ years
70%	1 ½ days Weekly	12 weeks	1 ½ years
65%	2 days Fortnightly	14 weeks	1 ¾ years
60%	2 days weekly	16 weeks	2 years
55%	2 ½ days Fortnightly	18 weeks	2 ¼ years
50%	2 ½ days Weekly	20 weeks	2 ½ years