



# English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Loving Jesus, Loving Learning, Loving Life



## Attendance Policy

<b>Policy Reviewed:</b>	March 2023
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	September 2024
<b>Reviewed By Local Governing Committee</b>	September 2023
<b>Adopted By Local Governing Committee</b>	November 2023
<b>Changes Made</b>	Procedure and protocol updated Attendance threshold changed

## Ethos Statement

Within the Mission Statement of the school, it makes it absolutely clear that the whole ethos of the school and all aspects of the school will reflect the practice and traditions of our Catholic faith. Such teachings direct us to believe that we are all “Pupils of God” and that we live by following the example of Jesus giving to us in the Gospels. We aspire to live out these Gospel Values but Within the Mission Statement of the school, it makes it absolutely clear that the whole ethos of the school and all aspects of the school will reflect the practice and traditions of our Catholic faith. Such teachings direct us to believe that we are all “Children of God” and that we live by following the example of Jesus giving to us in the Gospels. We aspire to live out these Gospel Values but putting the Beatitudes into practice in all that we do.

Our school motto – ‘*Loving Jesus, loving learning, loving life*’; along with the Beatitudes underpin all that we do here at English Martyrs’.

The principles of striving for excellence in all that we attempt to do and taking the opportunities offered for reconciliation should be uppermost in our minds when dealing with issues particularly when this involves conflict or misunderstandings between members of the school family.

## Be-attitudes

At English Martyrs’ Catholic School we follow what Jesus taught us in the Gospels., where the Be-attitudes underpin every element of our school.

**As a Catholic School we have the Catholic mission at our very core.**

Everyone in school is expected to actively follow and live out our mission statement:

**“Loving Jesus, Loving Learning, Loving Life.”**

We achieve our Mission Statement by following the Beatitudes as the foundation blocks of all we do. The Beatitudes give us the ATTITUDES that we want to BE.

We have Be-attitudes for Behaviour and Conduct (Our Core Values), Beatitudes for Learning and Beatitudes for Teaching.



## **Rationale**

English Martyrs Attendance Policy takes into account the Department for Education guidance, “Working together to improve school attendance” from May 2022. This guidance is for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. By law, pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. At English Martyrs, we recognise our responsibility to ensure pupils are in school and on time, accessing learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all pupils registered at this school, and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of registered pupils on our school website or available from the school office for those without access to the internet.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Pupils Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education, with guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s good attendance, the Head Teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed by all to ensure this happens.

Pupils who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Pupils who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and are clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve the achievement of our pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues or exceptional circumstances.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm, and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged pupils in order to promote good working habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Access and Inclusion Service so that all pupils can reach their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feels safe, secure, and valued, whilst encouraging a sense of responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and supporting with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Recognise the role of class teachers who can identify where attendance is having an impact on their attainment.

## **We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:**

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring parents have an understanding of their responsibility in making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping pupils with the age-appropriate skills to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## **Procedures**

### **Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:**

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Local Authority or appropriate agencies of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the nominated person with the responsibility for monitoring attendance.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### **Class teachers are responsible for:**

- Completing and maintaining accurate class registers in accordance with school policy.
- Forwarding completed registers to school office staff before registration closes.
- Informing the nominated person where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Where poor attendance reoccurs, ensuring appropriate school staff are informed.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.

- Ensuring appropriate school staff are informed of additional information provided by the child so it can be recorded in line with school policy.
- Discussing attendance issues at parents evening where necessary.

**Staff in the School Office are responsible for:**

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Ensuring the absent and late marks are recorded.
- Contacting parents of absent pupils where no contact has been made via telephone or through text message or email.
- Recording details of pupils who arrive late or go home early.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance regularly and consistently.
- First Day response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or text message)

**The Family Support Officer is responsible for:**

- Overall monitoring of school attendance, attendance levels and punctuality.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking at overall attendance, patterns or anomalies and unusual explanations for attendance offered by pupils, parents/carers.
- Reporting concerns to the Head Teacher.
- Contacting families when there are concerns about absence. This may include meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Talking to pupils on a 1:1 basis regarding attendance related matters.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns are raised.
- Making and supporting referral to the Local Authority.
- Providing attendance reports and background information to discuss with Senior Leadership Team.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Improving school attendance by carrying out home visits, attending meetings with parent/carer.
- Initiating Individual Attendance plans, monitoring and updating.
- Initiating parent contracts, monitoring and updating.
- Refer to outside agencies for support for families including school health, mental health services, CYPS, Attendance Service, Police and Social Care.

**The Head Teacher is responsible for:**

- Overall monitoring of school attendance, attendance levels and punctuality.
- Observing trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making and supporting referrals to the Local Authority.
- Regular liaising with the Family Support Officer and Senior Leadership Team to identify those at risk of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Working with the Family Support Officer to monitor attendance levels, identify patterns of absence and create strategies to improve attendance.

### Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time, but making best effort to attend outside of school ours. For the absence to be recorded as an authorised medical absence we require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter/prescription).
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

### Authorised absence.

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from parent/carer. For example, if a child is unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, **not all** absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Unauthorised absence.

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### Registers

1. Registers are legal documents.
2. There are two sessions per day to attend (AM and PM).
3. Parents **must always** give reasons for absence to the school.
4. Schools are to determine whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.
5. English Martyrs consider factors such as frequency and duration of absences, attendance patterns, evidence and exceptional circumstances. Staff must be observant of situations where absence is continually condoned by parents.

The guidelines below clarify possible actions

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
Illness	Absence without valid reason
Medical Appointment/ Dental (For the time of appointment including travelling)	Latecomers beyond 30 minutes after the session has started – 9:20am
Family Bereavement	Persistent lateness within the first 30 minutes of the day – 9:20
Religious Observance	Babysitting pupils including siblings.
Interview/ Work Experience	Shopping during school time.
Excluded Pupils	Special Occasions, e.g. birthday.

Sports/music/exams	Holidays
Agreed other educational activity at the discretion of the Head Teacher.	

***Please note: this is guidance only and it is the discretion of school whether to authorise an absence. If attendance falls below 90%, and we have concerns about your child's attendance, we will not authorise absences without supporting evidence.***

### **Reintegrating Long Term Absentees.**

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so staff may wish to arrange a phased or gradual return, allocation of a 'Key Worker', consider whether Special Needs support is appropriate, ensure that all staff are aware of the situation and nominate a key person to monitor the child's reintegration into school. All pupils must feel welcomed back and know from whom they can seek help.

### **Registration**

All school gates open at 8:40am for both EYFS, KS1 and KS2 and close at 8:50am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Pupil absence must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register for the morning must be complete by the class teacher by 9am, and by 1:10pm in the afternoon session.

All attendance records are stored on the Schools Information Management System (SIMS). Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date that they were last used.

### **Lateness**

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly (1996 Education Act). The school seeks to improve general punctuality and improve attitude of persistent offenders by:

- a. Informing parents/carers of our expectations and offer ways of helping combat lateness.
- b. Contacting parents/carers of persistent offenders and reporting to the Family Support Officer/Head Teacher if there is no improvement.
- c. Giving praise and acknowledgement to latecomers who improve.
- d. Ensuring that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons.
- e. Actively discouraging lateness with all pupils and parents/carers.
- f. Using incentives to improve levels of punctuality.

*The Family Support Officer will support pupils and families with any of the above issues.*

Once the doors are closed each morning, the only way to get into school is via the school office on Beaufront Gardens. Any pupil who uses this entrance after the gates are closed will be marked as late on the electronic register (code L). Any child who arrives later than 9:20am for both KS1 and KS2, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (code U).

Pupils who have attended a dentist or a doctor's appointment, and subsequently come into school later than 9am, will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (code M).

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount, of often the most important aspect of learning. The beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities to seek support and advice to address these issues.

### **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. Please use option 1 on the school phone system. Please leave your child's name, class and an accurate detailed reason for the absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

### **First day contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, we will initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9am-9:30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. When we are unaware why the child is absent, we will attempt to contact the parent/carer.

### **Illness**

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, where appropriate, the school will do all it can to send learning materials home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact support services to seek whether arrangements can be made for the child to be given home tuition outside of school.

If a child has repeated periods of illness over the academic year, school may write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card, letter or a copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries. Alternatively, we make a referral to the 0-19 Service for support.

### **Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday.**

With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence, specifically for holidays up to 10 days per year. Head Teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Parents are encouraged to keep open lines of communication with school over absence, as persistent absence can be considered a safeguarding matter.

Following guidance from Newcastle upon Tyne Local Authority, all holidays taken during term time will be subject to referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service for penalty notices (fines). **This change in policy will come into force from October 30<sup>th</sup> 2023.**

Please note that a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the Penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

### **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 97%.

It is important for pupils to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. It is the



responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

If we become concerned about your child's attendance, we will inform parents/carers of our concerns. It is the school aim to work with families and promote good attendance, avoiding legal action.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via letters home. In some cases, a child will be given an Individual Education Plan (see appendix 2) which outlines attendance levels, the previous history of attendance and what the next steps are to improve attendance.

Some parents/carers may be offered a Parent Contract (see appendix 3). This is an agreement between school and the parent/carer outlining how we will work together to improve attendance. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Where there is no improvement with support from school, then school have a responsibility to make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service. The Attendance Service will look at each case and may issue fixed penalty notices (fines) to parents where there is poor attendance.

The threshold for a referral to the Attendance Service for legal action, is a child whose attendance is 90% or less, with 10 sessions of unauthorised absences (two marks per day, AM & PM sessions), which is 5 full days of school.

The Local Authority Attendance Service working jointly with Legal Services may also consider:

- Applying for a parenting order.
- Applying for an education supervision order
- School Attendance Order (If a parent has not registered their child in a school)
- Community Order.

The Local Authority Attendance Officer can remotely monitor attendance levels regularly carrying out register checks to identify pupils with low attendance.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the School Information Management System. Regular meetings are held with the Head Teacher and Family Support Officer to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

At English Martyrs' we follow a traffic light system. The purpose of colour coding helps Staff, Parents and Pupils to have a clear understanding of our expectations (see appendix 1).

- **Red Zone: Below 90%**

Students in the Red Zone are more likely to underachieve and find making friendships difficult. If your child falls into the Red Zone, we will contact you and may offer an Individual Attendance Plan or a Parent Contract. Legal action may also be taken.

- **Amber Zone: 90% - 94%**

Students in this zone are still at risk of underachieving due to the absence level. Students who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress. If your child falls into the

Amber Zone, their attendance will be monitored and your child may become subject of an Individual Attendance Plan to help avoid your child falling into the Red Zone.

- **Green Zone: 95% and over**

We expect students to have Green Zone attendance throughout their education. Those in the Green are more likely to do well in examinations, have better job opportunities and can develop strong friendships within school.

### **Rewards and Recognition**

We will recognise the effort of those in Green Zone, with:

- Weekly shoutout for the best class attendance in weekly celebration assembly.
- Termly certificates
- Letters in recognition for most improvement.
- Positive Postcards.
- Termly raffle for those in Green At the end of the year a raffle with the names of all the pupils who are in the 'Green Zone'.

### **The Complaints Procedure**

Initially, an attempt will be made to resolve a complaint about attendance monitoring at school level, within one week of the complaint having first been made. The Family Support Worker will make attempts to resolve matters, then if required the Head Teacher and Deputy Headteacher.

If the complaint remains unresolved, then the complainant is advised to make this formal, in writing to the chair of the Local Governing Committee. Contact details can be found on the school website.

### **Reviewing the Policy**

This policy will be available to view on the school website at [www.emcps.co.uk](http://www.emcps.co.uk) and will be included at induction for any new staff members.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Local Governing Committee. If there are reasonable changes to the structure and/or major personalities of the school, the review may be conducted at an earlier period than the agreed annual date.



## English Martyrs Attendance Traffic Light System



### Red Zone: Below 90%

- Persistent absentee
- Struggle with learning
- Underachieve
- Miss out on opportunities
- Struggle with friendships



### Amber Zone: 90% - 94%

- Cause for Concern
- At risk of attendance monitoring
- Higher chance of moving into Red Zone

### Green Zone: 95% and over

- Achieve in school
- Better friendships
- More chance of success



Attendance is reviewed on a **termly basis**.

If a pupil is in the Red Zone, we will offer an attendance plan.

This may be an Individual Attendance Plan or a Parent Contract.

We will work together to improve attendance.

Red Zone attendance meets the threshold for referral to the Local Authority.

*Please refer to the attendance policy for more information.*



### Individual Attendance Plan

<b>Name:</b>	<b>DOB:</b>

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>In attendance:</b>

Attendance Zone	Less than 89%	90% - 94%	95% - 100%
Review 1			
Review 2			
Review 3			



What are the reasons for absence? (please tick)			
Genuine Medical		Illness	
Parent Well being		Truancy / lesson avoidance	
No Reason Provided		Student Mental Health	
Behaviour / exclusions		Bullying	
Historic Attendance Issues		Peer/Relationship Issues	
Parent having difficulties getting child to school		School based anxiety	
Other:		Reason:	



What actions have been taken? (please tick)			
Traffic Light Monitoring		Curriculum/class changes	
Student Interview		Peer mediation	
Telephone calls home		Rewards & Recognition	
Meeting with parent/carer		Early Help	
Attendance Improvement meeting		Referral to Outside Agency:	
Legal Action		Group work	
Other:			

Historic Attendance:								
Nursery (1)	Nursery (2)	EYs	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6

Information Shared (Including views of the parent/child, where possible):



Target:	Strategies	Monitoring Milestones	Responsible person	Outcome

Signed:	



**English Martyrs'  
Catholic Primary School**

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## Parenting Contract

**Pupil's name:**

**Parent/Carer name(s):**

**Staff name:**

**Staff position:**

**Date:**

As a parent/carers you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly. <child forename>'s recent level of attendance at school was <current attendance%>. This includes X(minimum of 1) unauthorised absences and is unsatisfactory. Further absences may not be authorised without evidence of illness.

School would like to work with you to identify and focus on the issues around improving your child's school attendance. A parenting contract provides you with the opportunity to give your views and be involved in deciding the support that would help you.

A parenting contract is a formal agreement that outlines the support available as well as the steps that you will take to improve your child's attendance.

If the local authority decided to take legal action against you for unsatisfactory attendance, your co-operation with a parenting contract may assist your case. However, refusal to comply with a contract may be used in evidence against you.

### Either

You are strongly advised to contact Miss Moran on 0191 274 7463 by < Reply date> to arrange a meeting to discuss and draw up a parenting contract.

### Or

You are invited to a meeting at English Martyrs on <date> at <time> to discuss and draw up a parenting contract. If this time is not convenient, please contact Miss Moran via the school office on 0191 2747463 to arrange an alternative appointment.

I am enclosing a leaflet that explains more about parenting contracts.

Yours Sincerley,

**Miss L Moran**  
Family Support Officer  
Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Artsmark  
Silver Award  
Awarded by Arts  
Council England



Newcastle  
City Council





### **What is a parenting contract?**

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent or carer and the school. A parenting contract may be offered if your child has failed to attend school regularly.

A parenting contract is meant to support you and the school to identify and address the issues surrounding your child's irregular attendance at school and encourage a positive working relationship to improve attendance. It is not intended to be a punishment.

### **What does it involve?**

Everyone signed up to the contract will agree to take certain actions which are realistic and which address the issues of non-attendance for a specified period of time. You might agree to do things like getting your child up on time, signing a daily report card and reporting any difficulties to school as soon as possible. School might agree to inform you if your child does not arrive at school, deal quickly with any problems and involve other agencies that might be able to offer you additional support. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

### **Do I have to enter into a parenting contract?**

Entry into a parenting contract is voluntary but it does provide you with an opportunity to get support to improve your child's attendance at school. If you do take up the offer of a parenting contract and try to comply with it, this may assist your case if the local authority decides to take legal action against you for your child's irregular attendance. If you refuse the offer or don't comply without good reason this may also be presented as evidence.

If you decide not to enter into a contract, you will need to try to find other ways of improving your child's attendance and it may be worth discussing how you intend to do this with the school.

### **How is a parenting contract arranged?**

You will be invited to a meeting in school with a school representative.

At the meeting you will be asked your views on your child's attendance and whether there are any underlying issues. Try to think about the reasons behind your child's absences, any particular difficulties you are experiencing at the moment and what would help you to improve your child's attendance. Also think about what you can do to improve attendance.

School will explain what support they can offer and whether any other agency might also be able to help you and your child. You will be able to discuss what is expected of both you and the school and then agree the actions that will support improved attendance. If you choose to accept the offer, the final contract will be signed by you and the school representative.

