



*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9*

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. St. Maxentius CE Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

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

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, all staff 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 to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children 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 child 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 clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- 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 Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and other agencies so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.



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- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.  
We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:
- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters through weekly newsletters, attendance leaflets and email/texts to parents.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness (see appendix one – flow chart)
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Weekly newsletters will report attendance for each class in school. This will be RAG rated in line with the school's flow chart (appendix one). The class with the highest attendance each week, will be celebrated in Friday's worship with a trophy and extra break time.
- At the end of each term, all children with 100% attendance will be celebrated in worship and receive a certificate and badge.

## Definitions

### 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 a parent or carer through a leave of absence request or if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. This will be followed up daily by members of the office staff.
- For absences that do not relate to illness, only the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher can authorise an absence. Each request received will be looked at on a case by case basis, taking into account previous attendance figures for the child/children.

- **Unauthorised absence**



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- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

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### **School Expectations**

School will take 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 daily with parents/carers.
- 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 pupils attendance and punctuality where appropriate.
- To refer to the Local Authority process and begin the Early Help Process for any pupils where there are concerns regarding homelessness and to refer to children's social care if deemed necessary.
- To report attendance statistics to Bolton LA and the DfE where requested.

### **Procedures**

- At the start of each academic year, parents will receive a letter with an accompanying leaflet explaining the school's attendance procedures. (Appendix two)
- Early identification of poor attendance will be recorded on CPOMS from all staff, particularly office staff. If parents are requesting time off school, a leave of absence form must be completed. This will be reviewed by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and recorded on CPOMS.
- Attendance will be closely monitored by all staff, particularly SLT and the school office. A fortnightly meeting with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and office staff will take place and a review of recent absences will take place in line with the flow chart (Appendix one). Any updates will be recorded on CPOMS.
- Families triggering a concern with attendance will receive a letter highlighting school's concern. (Appendix 3) Any updates will be recorded on CPOMS.
- If no improvement is seen, a further letter will be sent after 2 weeks as a final opportunity to improve attendance before a formal meeting will be held. Any updates will be recorded on CPOMS. (Appendix 4)
- Without improvement, a further letter (appendix 5) will be sent detailing a meeting which parents must attend. During this meeting, a plan of action and strategies will



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be put in place to support the family in improving attendance. Any updates will be recorded on CPOMS.

- Following the face-to-face meeting, if the attendance does not improve, school will contact early intervention for additional support which could also lead to fines and penultimately, a child being taken off roll. Any updates will be recorded on CPOMS.

### **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

### **Parents**

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 every morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised and parents will need to complete a leave of absence request.
- 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 and support can be put in place.

### **Registration**

All the school doors open at 8.45 until 8.55 am. 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. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8.55 am and by 1.10pm. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present)

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### **Lateness**



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Once the doors are closed at 8.55am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.55am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.10 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8.55am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

**Prepared by:** Mrs L Cousen (Headteacher)

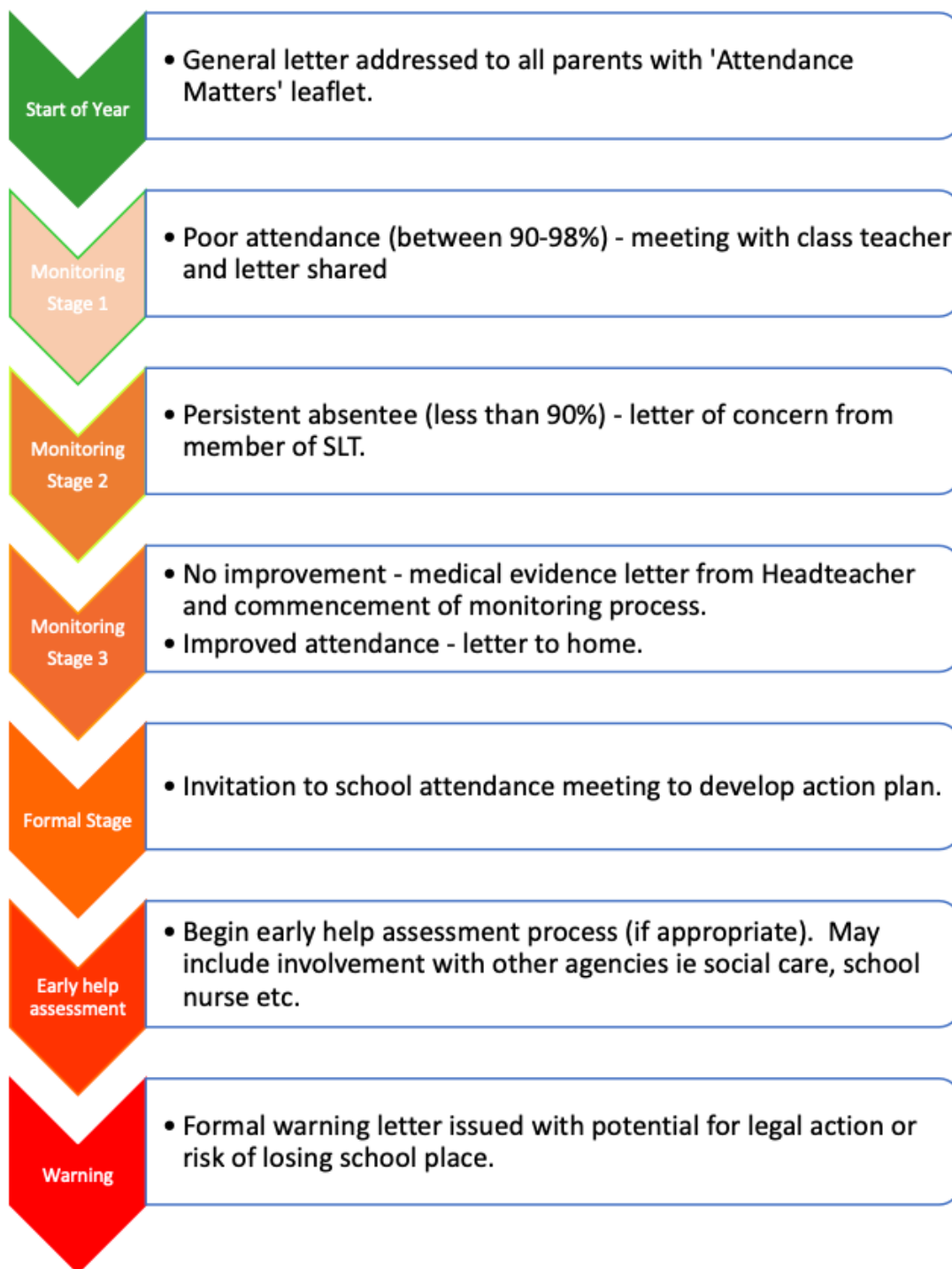
**Reviewed:** November 2022

**Next Review Date:** November 2024

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Appendix one

# ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURE





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## Appendix two

Dear Parent/Carer

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR ALL PARENTS AND CARERS**

As you know any absence from school disrupts the education of your child as well as the class as a whole. I am writing to let you know how we will be monitoring attendance in the future.

I have attached a leaflet about school attendance and how it effects your child and how it is monitored here at St Maxentius. Please take a few moments to read through it.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the many parents who make every effort to ensure their children attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Cousen (Headteacher)



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If your child has more than 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence, the Local Authority may decide to prosecute parents. If this happens:

- A Penalty Notice of £60 per parent, per child may be issued by the Local Authority. This amount doubles if unpaid after 21 days. Failure to pay could lead to prosecution.
- Parents can be fined up to £1,000 or prosecuted for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Prosecution would incur a fine of up to £2,500.
- A magistrate can also impose a Parenting Order or Community Service. This may also mean that parents have to attend a counselling and guidance programme.

**Term time holidays**

The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances why your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply, in advance, by completing a 'Leave of Absence' form, explaining clearly the reason for the leave of absence and the dates your child will be away from school.

If the school refuses your request and you still take your child out of school, then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and a note will be made on your child's school attendance record. You may also receive Penalty Notice for the period of absence and/or lose the place in school.

Mrs L Cousen



**St Maxentius CE Primary School**  
**ATTENDANCE MATTERS**

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS  
St Maxentius CE Primary School  
Tel: 01204 333106

Your child's education is really important. Regular attendance at school increases your child's chance of getting a good qualifications and a good job in the future.



**What can you do?**

Make sure your child attends school regularly and arrive on time too! If your child arrives at school after 9.20am, it is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If you child is not coming into school you must, as soon as you can, on the first day of absence:

- telephone the school or
- email school
- visit school to notify the office staff why your child is absent and when they will be back in school.

You must notify school daily of your child's absence until they return to school.

The reasons your child should not be kept off school include:

- looking after brothers and sisters
- parental illness
- to visit relatives
- to go on shopping trips
- birthdays
- holidays during term time including long weekends.

**The Law**

You as a parent/carer are responsible for:

- Ensuring your child receive full-time education
- Ensuring they attend school regularly.

As a parent/carer you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure your child attends school regularly. Failure to do so may put you at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice or being taken to court, and your child being taken off roll.

Appendix three







"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Dear **(Name)**

### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – NAME

I am writing to you to express concern about **(Name)** attendance in school. After reviewing our latest attendance data, I have to inform you that **(his/her)** attendance is **(X)%**. **(Name)** has also had **(XX)** late marks before the close of register and **(X)** unauthorised absence. Please understand that I am aware why **(Name)** has been absent from school but I hope you understand and share our concerns.

As a school we are working hard to improve our attendance figures, not just for us as a school community but also for the individual children; it is an Ofsted requirement that we do so. Through the assessment procedures used in school, teachers can see a real difference in academic ability and progress between those children who attend school regularly and those who do not. Unfortunately, your child's attendance rate could have a detrimental effect on the progress they are making in school.

The government deem 96% to be satisfactory attendance and, as you can see **(Name)** is considerably below this. The government also class any child whose attendance is below 90% to be a 'persistent absentee', and these attendance figures are reported to Ofsted. Therefore, **(Name)** is now classed as a persistent absentee in our data records.

I am therefore asking you to ensure that **(Name)** is in school on time on a daily basis. School will continue to monitor your child's attendance and may invite you into school to discuss this matter further if no, or little, improvements are made.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Cousen



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## Appendix four

Dear **(Name of Parent)**

### ATTENDANCE – CHILD'S NAME

Further to my letter dated (XXXX) I am now writing to inform you that as there has been no improvement in your child's attendance. Therefore, any future absences must be supported by medical evidence showing the grounds for the illness. The Department for Education guidance states: "If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards etc., rather than doctors' notes".

Regrettably, if such evidence is not forthcoming, the school will be obliged to record any such absence as 'unauthorised' and this could result in penalty notices and fines being issued.

Obviously, as a school, we want to avoid this action, but we do need to see an immediate improvement in your child's attendance. As I have said to you in my previous letter, teachers can see a real difference in the academic ability and progress between those children who attend school regularly and those who do not. It is our job – both yours and the school – to ensure your child receives the education they are entitled to.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance please contact the school.

Yours sincerely Mrs Cousen



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## Appendix five

Dear **(Name of Parent)**

### INVITATION TO A SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW MEETING – CHILDS NAME AND DOB

There have been continuing difficulties concerning the attendance of your child **(Name)** at St Maxentius CE Primary School.

You have been offered advice and support to improve **(Name)** attendance and prevent the need for legal action.

In an attempt to resolve issues regarding attendance, a school attendance review meeting has been arranged at St Maxentius CE Primary School on **(Appointment Date)** and **(Time)**. It is very important that you attend this meeting. Your co-operation is essential. The meeting will be an opportunity for you to discuss any matters of concern.

Failure to attend this meeting and further unauthorised absence could result in your being prosecuted in court and/or a penalty notice being issued.

I have to advise you as parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 444, Education Act 1996).

Please contact me as a matter of urgency on the telephone number above, if you are unable to attend. If I am not available then please leave a contact telephone number and a short message. I will respond as soon as I am able.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Cousen (Headteacher)