St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Junior School

Attendance Policy

Review Date: Autumn Term 2027

Approved: M Rawsthorne

Signed by:

Signature:

Date: September 2026

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

St Margaret Mary's Roman Catholic Junior School is a highly inclusive school, and we strive to ensure that all our pupils receive a high-quality education. We pride ourselves on our bespoke curriculum which has been designed to ensure that learning experiences are rich and balanced as we love, learn and grow together with Jesus.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Vision

At St Margaret Mary's Roman Catholic Junior School, we are committed to providing the best support for our children and families. Through an inclusive approach, we aim to empower children to attend school regularly and overcome any potential barriers they may face in their educational journey.

Our approach is designed to ensure that everyone - our staff, families, and children - fully understands their individual roles and collective responsibilities in supporting school attendance, active engagement in learning, and addressing potential barriers.

Recognition-Based Approach

Our attendance philosophy is rooted in a recognition-based approach that recognises both personal and collective achievements. This approach serves to thwart isolation, prevent victimisation, cultivate positive environments, nurture relationships, foster inclusivity, and ultimately cultivate intrinsic motivation among our children, families, and staff.

Multi-Tiered System of Support:

We operate a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) which ensures comprehensive attendance intervention for all children. The system comprises three Tiers:

- Tier 1 provides a universal offering to all children.
- Tier 2 involves early internal support and intervention.
- Tier 3 is higher levels of support for children, young people and families who require access to external agency support.

The system incorporates staff, children, parents, and external agencies. The process is completely aligned with Department for Education (DFE) guidelines. Please refer to Appendix 1 for details of our Multi-Tiered System of Support

Importance of School Attendance:

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system.

Safeguarding Children

The school has a duty to safeguard the welfare of all students. Any concerns about a child's attendance will be investigated promptly to ensure support for their well-being. - Unexplained or extended absences will trigger safeguarding procedures, which may include home visits and communication with relevant agencies.

Effective Interventions and Signposting:

To address attendance issues effectively, we endeavour to create a positive and inclusive school environment.
We also (in partnership with Knowsley Education Welfare Team) implement strategies such as early intervention, support for vulnerable families and a variety intervention programme including:-

- Rainbows
- Thrive
- Learning Mentor Support
- Mental health Support Team (MHST)
- Listening Ear
- Power of Parenting Programme

Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents

Parents play a vital role in ensuring school attendance by fostering a culture of punctuality and commitment to their child's education. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child's regular and on time attendance, which not only supports their academic progress but also instils essential life skills.

School

The school will play a critical role in monitoring and promoting attendance. This will be achieved through communication with parents, identifying and addressing barriers to attendance, and implementing necessary interventions to support students in their education.

Children

The role of children attending school is to actively engage in their education, demonstrate a commitment to learning, and adhere to the school's attendance policies. By attending school regularly and punctually, students not only benefit from their educational opportunities but also contribute to a positive and inclusive learning environment for themselves and their peers. Consistent attendance is essential for their academic progress, social development, and preparation for future success, ensuring they make the most of the educational resources provided by the school.

External agencies

These agencies play a crucial role in supporting school attendance by offering specialised services and resources to address various attendance-related challenges. External agencies often collaborate with our school, and we signpost families to relevant services, including educational welfare officers, counsellors, and other local authorities' teams. They provide additional support for students and their families, helping to tackle underlying issues such as health problems, social or behavioural difficulties, and other barriers to attendance. By working together, external agencies and schools can identify and address these issues effectively, promoting improved school attendance and well-being.

School Time

The school gates open at 8.30am and school begins at 8.45am (this is the time that the register is taken). School ends at 3. 15pm.Children are expected to arrive on time and attend all scheduled lessons and activities.

Requesting Absence Leave

There is no entitlement to time off in term time and leave of absence for holidays during term time and such absence from school will not be authorised. Holidays in term time will incur a fine. We would ask that parents aim to arrange any medical appointments (dental/ doctor) out of school hours. Where this is not possible (e.g. in the case of a hospital appointment), parents or carers should request leave of absence for their child in writing at their earliest convenience and at least five school days in advance.

Reporting a Child's Absence

Parents or carers must contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of their child's absence to provide the reason for the absence and an estimated return date. Absences should be reported directly to the school office (either in person/by e mail or via the attendance line that is accessible via the main school number). Should the absence continue, we ask that parents keep in regular contact with the school to keep school informed of ongoing health concerns. Medical evidence/medical appointment cards may be requested from parents to help us to authorise a child's absence.

Medical Conditions
Parents are requested to inform school about any ongoing medical conditions that their child suffers from. School will work closely with parents, school nurses and other medical professionals to support children with ongoing medical conditions.

Public Health England provides schools with information about how long children will need to be absent from school with specific health conditions. Parents are welcome to contact the school office and ask for Public Health advice

Additional Policies:

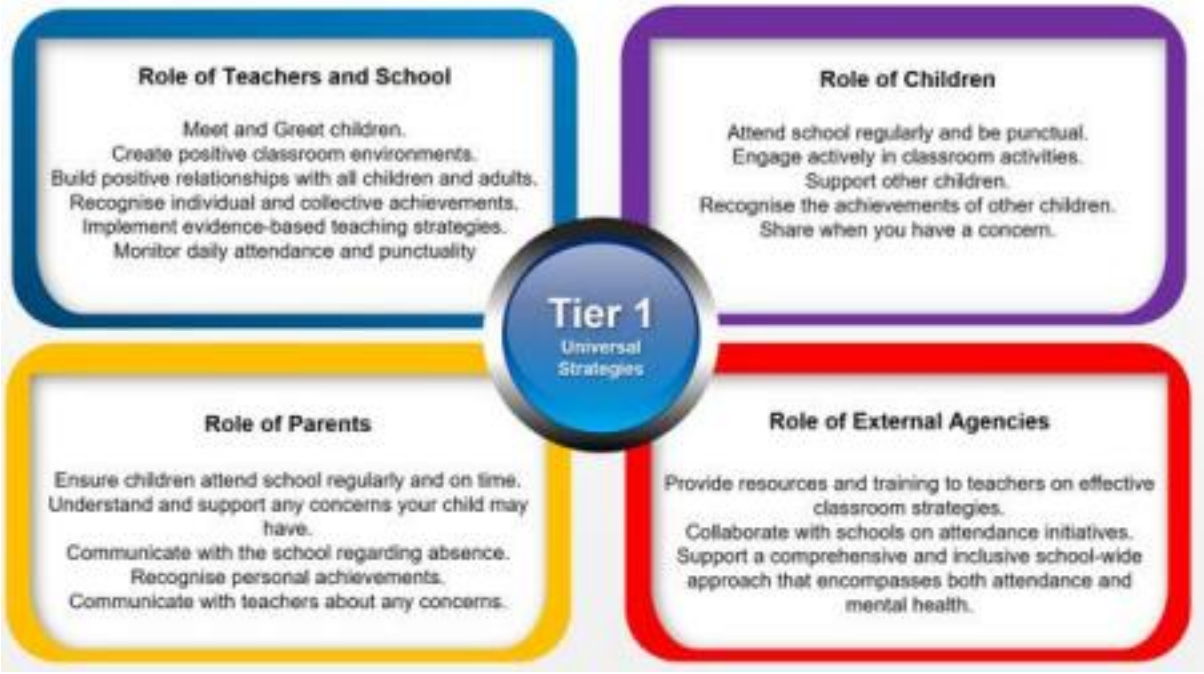
- Behaviour Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- SEND statement
- Pupil Premium Strategy

Review
This Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually by the school's governing body to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with statutory requirements. Any amendments will be communicated to staff, parents, and carers as necessary.

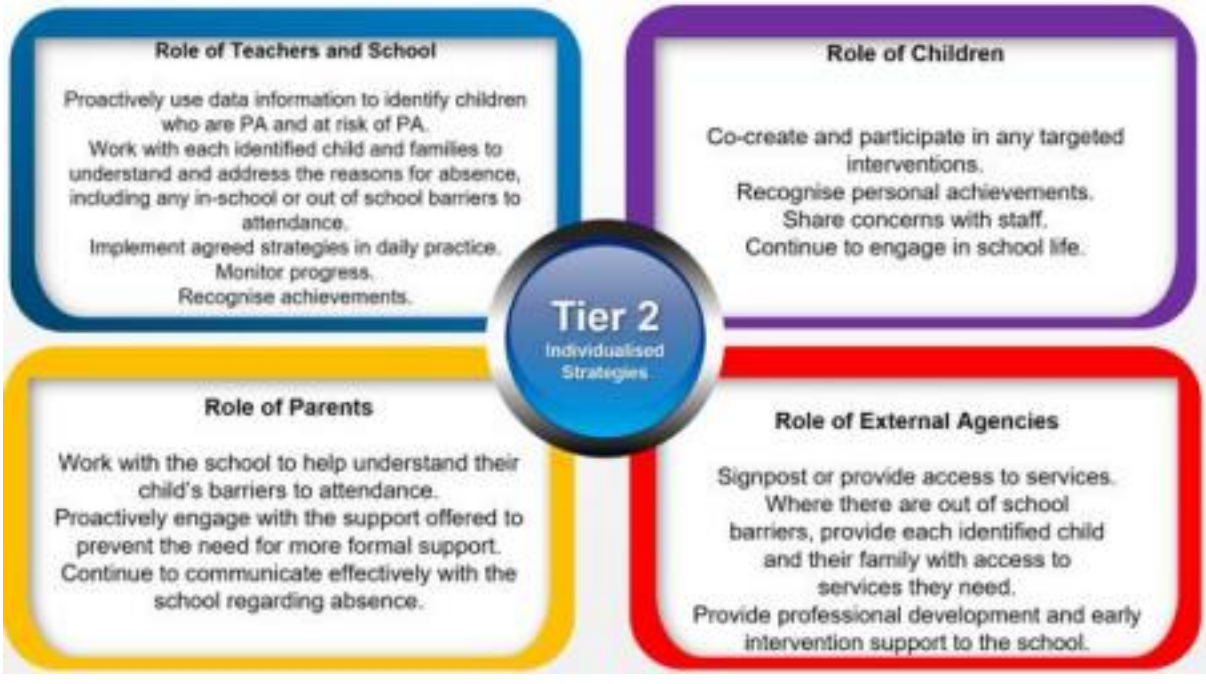
APPENDIX 1

Multi-Tiered System of Support

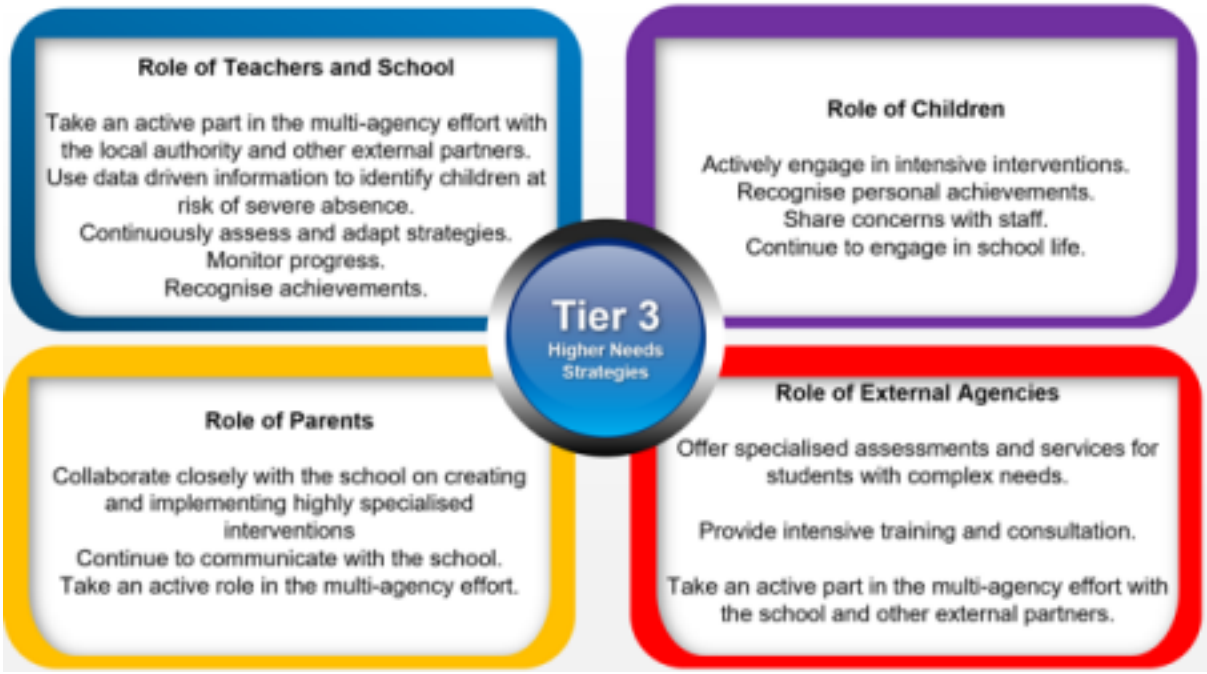
Tier 1 - Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.



Tier 2 – Internal individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges.



Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary.



APPENDIX 2

Definitions:
The terms "Persistent Absence," "Risk of Persistent Absence," and "Severe Absence" are used to describe different levels of irregular attendance by students. Here are their definitions:

Persistent Absence (PA):

Definition: Persistent Absence is a term used to describe a level of student absence from school that is a significant cause for concern.

Threshold: In England, a student is persistently absent when they have an attendance rate of 90% or below. This means they have missed 10% or more of their school sessions. For most children during the academic year this will amount to **19 days absence.**

Risk of Persistent Absence:
Definition: The term "Risk of Persistent Absence" refers to a situation in which a student's attendance is at a level that suggests they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

Threshold: While there is no specific threshold for "Risk of Persistent Absence," it is typically used to describe students whose attendance is consistently below 95% but has not yet reached the 90% threshold for persistent absence. As the school communicates to parents in days, we identify **18 days to 12 days** as risk of PA.

Severe Absence (or Severe Persistent Absence):

Definition: The term "Severe Absence" is used to describe the most serious cases of non attendance.

Threshold: Focus will be given by all 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 across a range of partners and potential flexible adjustments to support them further.

APPENDIX 3

Register Codes

O	Unauthorised absence
C	Other authorised absence
I	Illness (not a doctor or dental appointment)
M	Medical or dental appointment
B	Educated off site
E	Excluded
H	Holiday agreed
V	Educational visit
U	Late after close of register.
T	Traveller absence
F	Extended holidays (agreed)
J	Interview
P	Approved sporting activity
G	Family holiday not agreed
L	Late before close of register
R	Religious observance

D	Dual registration (attending other establishment)

APPENDIX 4

Penalty Notice Warnings and Fines:

As a school that promotes inclusive attendance, we ideally want to work with parents so that Penalty Notices can be avoided. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances whereby we feel we have no option but to issue a Penalty Notice.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

School should initially issue a warning letter to parents on school headed paper. The letter should refer to recent/current unauthorised absence and warn of a likelihood of an Education Penalty Notice if the threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) is reached within a ten-week period, this may span more than one term. ***In law a parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered.***

- In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after registration has closed and has lost 10 unauthorised late sessions within a period of no more than 10 weeks.
- A combination of reasons which amounts to 10 sessions lost to unauthorised absence within a period of no more than 10 weeks.

If leave of absence has not been requested, a warning letter and fine may be issued.

Penalty Notices will involve the recipient paying a fine of £160 within 28 days (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days). Where a Penalty Notice is not paid in full, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider instigating legal proceedings. If proven, this can result in a range of fine up to £2500 and/or a range of disposals such as parents order or community sentences.

Where an unauthorised absence has been dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice and the Penalty Notice has been paid, it is not possible for a parent to be prosecuted for the same period of unauthorised absence.

APPENDIX 5

Children Missing in Education

When school has not been able to contact a parent for a period of ten days, the child is a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations under Safeguarding Procedures, which will include liaising with the School Attendance Service, Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to track and locate the child.

APPENDIX 6

Home Education

Parents may decide to educate their child from home. Schools must be informed of this intention (in writing) by the parent and this information will be passed to the relevant professionals within the Local Authority (including the Attendance Service).

APPENDIX 7

Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for a day of religious observance.

APPENDIX 8

Modelling, Sport and Acting Performances

Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the Local Authority (LA). Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the Local Authority. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements

The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school for a lengthy period to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. These arrangements will be approved by the Local Authority who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring that these arrangements are carried out. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the Local Authority issuing the licence.

Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the Local Authority decides to grant the application, the Local Authority will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period. It is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. In making this decision account will be taken of the pupil's current (and past) attendance.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.

Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

APPENDIX 9

Reintegration of a pupil following a period of absence:

If a child has been absent from school for a prolonged period, their return to school needs to be planned and dealt with sensitively and considerately. The Assistant Headteacher, Learning Mentor and class teacher will work closely together to decide on the nature and amount of support that is needed (which will depend on the child and the circumstances). Any problems will be reported to the Management Team as soon as possible.

Where a child is suspended, this will be dealt with as an authorised absence. Whilst the pupil remains on the school register the school will recognise its responsibilities and set the relevant work for the child. On returning to school the child and parent/guardian will report to

a member of the Senior Leadership Team for a Re-integration Meeting.