



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
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Legal School Attendance Update September 2026

Please read carefully as this is law from 1/9/25.

By request of the government and the Local Authority, attendance will be monitored weekly and focus will be put on children whose attendance is **below 90%**. Letters from school will begin to be sent home once your child's attendance falls below 95%. This is so you are aware of the attendance level. The school doors open at 8:30am. The school start time for registration opens at 8:45-8:55am. Late marks will be issued after 9am. If a child arrives after 9:20am they will be issued with an unauthorised mark for the morning. These could result in a fine or the involvement of the Education Attendance Officers from Sefton.

All holidays are **unauthorised** and **may** be subject to a fine from **Sefton Council**, (our school does not receive this money). There are 365 days in a year and children are to attend school for 190 of these days. That leaves 175 days off school to spend with family and friends and to go on holidays. It is very hard and almost impossible for children to catch up on multiple days absent from school. School have a right to unauthorise an absence if we suspect that children are on holiday.

Penalty Notices will be issued to **each** parent liable for the offence. 'Parent' includes: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child.

The Penalty

If your child/ren have **10 sessions** (equal to 5 days) of unauthorised marks from either holidays, lateness or persistent sickness without evidence across 10 school's weeks then you will be issued with a fine from Sefton. These sessions do need to be consecutive.

The **First** Penalty Notice is £160 per parent per child. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt.

2nd Penalty Notices: any second penalty notice issued to the same parent/s for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement. A parent shall not be issued with more than two Penalty Notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child within a 3-year rolling period. If a third offence is committed within the 3-year rolling period, the local authority must consider other options available to them. This will include a consideration to prosecute under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The School Attendance Support Service will monitor the number of penalty notices issued to any parent in a 3-year rolling period.

At times, it is accepted that children will be genuinely ill but unless they are contagious or are unable to physically get to school they need to be in. Parents have a duty of care by law to make sure their child/ren receive an education. School have a duty of care by law to make sure their children receive an education.

At times school may ask for a doctor's note for reoccurring illnesses otherwise your child may incur an unauthorised absence mark. I need to stress that if the unauthorised absences for illness go above the amount accepted by the Local Authority, fines may be issued for these illnesses.

As part of our school's commitment to improving attendance we offer termly attendance awards for children with 98% or above attendance. We also have year group weekly attendance awards. Children who get 100% in one given week are put into a draw and can win a prize. The raffle changes weekly. Our whole school target is 96%. In the summer of 2026 school's overall attendance was 94%.

We want you to help us to get your children into school to help them make the best possible progress and to continue to improve our overall attendance by working together.

Yours sincerely

KScott

Mrs. K Scott
Headteacher