



ST. MARY'S *Catholic High School, Dubai*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026-2027

St. Mary's Catholic High School, Dubai

At St. Mary's Catholic High School, Dubai, we believe that every child has the right to learn in a safe and caring environment which will aid him or her to be a successful twenty first century learner. It is without a doubt then that regular attendance contributes very positively to academic success.



Research has consistently proven that there is a direct relationship between attendance, punctuality and academic success. At St. Mary's we strongly support this belief and recognize that as students develop reliable attendance habits, they are demonstrating a life skill that will positively impact their lives while in school and after graduation. Therefore St. Mary's is committed to forming a cooperative alliance with parents/guardians and students in order to improve attendance and encourage students to maintain an attendance record over 98%.

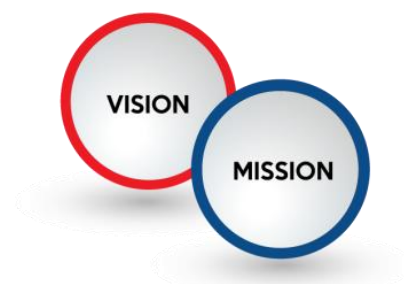
As with all the policies of the school, we believe that our stated mission and vision for the next five years underlies the ethos of the school and underpins everything that the school stands for,

MISSION STATEMENT

We serve with compassion to develop a deep sense of integrity, mutual respect and tolerance within the Marian family so that the uniqueness of each person is celebrated, allowing them to holistically develop as successful learners and responsible citizens.

VISION:

We envision ourselves as a school community that consistently strives to develop highly independent learners who confidently showcase innovation through meaningful reflection and purposeful collaboration. We aim to achieve this by ensuring every teacher inspires students through effective questioning and feedback to reach their highest potential in a culturally diverse society.



The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) has set guidelines for attendance as follows:

- ✓ Outstanding – 98%
- ✓ Very good- 96 %
- ✓ Good- 94%
- ✓ Acceptable- 92 %
- ✓ Weak – Less than 92%
- ✓ Very weak - Less than below 90%

Our policy is applicable to every child enrolled in this school, and it is accessible to all parties involved. Children who consistently arrive late or are frequently absent quickly start to fall back in their attainment and progress and often develop significant learning deficiencies that will hinder their advancement and their capacity to achieve age-appropriate learning standards.

AIMS:

This policy aims to:

- Promote and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality.
- Develop a whole school culture that emphasises the benefits of full attendance.
- Create an ethos in which outstanding attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Support students and families in addressing barriers to regular attendance.
- Establish clear procedures for recording, reporting, and managing absences in compliance with KHDA regulations.
- Align with KHDA's guidelines and statutory principles.

TAKING ATTENDANCE

- All students will have registration with their class teachers in the morning after the assembly
- Attendance data for the day is reflected in every classroom
- Teachers take attendance directly in SIMS and parents can view this immediately via the SIMS learning gateway or the SIMS Parent App.
- Post-16 students have their attendance taken by every Subject teacher in addition to the morning registration attendance.
- Attendance data in the classroom is updated by teachers in the first and second lessons of the day
- Latecomers are recorded daily at school entry points as well as by teachers.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

- Keeping student safeguarding as a key priority, the school sends out emails to all parents from year five upwards for all absences that are not informed in advance. This keeps students safe and makes parents clearly aware if a child is not in school.
- All parents can track their child's daily attendance on the SIMS Parent App
- Parents are also sent emails where there are frequent late arrivals citing the exact number of late arrivals for a specified time period.
- All absences, whether justified or unjustified, are reflected in student attainment report cards.

WHAT CAN FAMILIES DO?

- **Build regular routines** for bedtime and in the morning
- **Lay out clothes and pack school bags** the night before
- **Talk about the importance of regular attendance** and about how your child feels about school.
- **Strictly avoid scheduling family vacations/ holidays** outside of the holiday windows in the approved KHDA school calendar
- **Plan for morning traffic** and leave slightly earlier so as to get kids to school well on time.
- **Avoid scheduling pre-planned medical appointments during school hours.**
- **Keep a simple chart** recording your child's attendance at home. At the end of each week, talk about what you can see.
- **Seek support** from school staff or family friends when there are health issues.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students are responsible to:

- Attend school regularly and attend all lessons
- Arrive on time to school and at all lessons
- Be fully involved in all lessons
- Follow the procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Be responsible for carrying out any work provided by the school during an authorized absence period.

Parents are responsible to:

- Make every effort to ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Inform the school if their child is unable to attend school with a valid reason for all absences. This will be done by sending an email to the class teacher the previous evening or before 7:00 am the morning of the absence.
- Schedule family vacations to coincide with scheduled school breaks in the approved KHDA school calendar
- Make all appointments e.g. dentist / doctor outside of school time.
- Work with the school to resolve issues where possible and ensure good attendance and punctuality.
- Contact school, either by form, email or phone, to the Class Teacher whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Inform the class teacher / school clinic in the event of the student contracting an illness or suffering an injury which would make an absence of 3 days or more likely, and subsequently keep the school informed on the student's progress.
- Provide the class teacher / school clinic with a medical note or a sick leave certificate from their child's treating physician indicating the nature of the child's illness, and their expected date of return to school. A DHA certificate specifying the exact number of sick leave days is required for leave of more than 3 days of medical leave.

Teachers are responsible to :

- Set an example by being punctual arriving on time to registration and lessons.
- Mark the daily attendance register (SIMS Lesson Monitor) accurately at the start of the day.
- Alert the leadership team if a student was present in the morning but absent for a lesson later in the day.
- Emphasize and model the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure absence notes/ emails are received and record reasons of absence accurately in SIMS.

Administrative staff are responsible to :

- Capture daily attendance data by the third lesson.
- Report on the daily attendance data to the principal
- Contact parents via email for daily unexplained or uninformed absences.

The Senior Leadership is responsible to :

- Set an example in punctuality
- Appoint one member of the IT to oversee attendance management.
- Ensure all staff are trained and aware of the school's attendance procedures
- Emphasize and model the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Review attendance data regularly and implement school-wide strategies to promote outstanding attendance.

Nature of absence:

In order to foster academic excellence and preserve the priority of academics and classroom learning at St. Mary's we only permit the following absences.

Permissible Absences :

1. Personal Illness/Injury – A doctor's note is accepted the day the child returns to school. A DHA certificate specifying the exact number of sick leave days is required for leave of more than 3 days of medical leave.
2. Death of a close family member (mother, father, grandparents, brother or sister). Permission will be granted at the discretion of the principal.
3. Doctor's appointment- proof of the appointment must be provided.
4. Approved school-related activities that are school sponsored and school supervised. (Prior approval is required).
5. Other urgent/ emergency personal circumstances and events that the principal or his/her designee agrees are valid and urgent. (These might not be applicable to examination days)

Unexcused Absences :

- a. A student is unexcused when he/she is absent without a valid excuse or has not received prior permission from the school to be absent. Parents to send an email to the class teacher explaining any absence. Class teachers will check the same with the Vice Principal.
- b. Vacations, when school is in session, are not justified absences. Family vacations should be planned to coincide with the holiday windows in the KHDA approved school calendar.
- c. Absences other than those specifically designated as excused may be classified as unjustified upon review by the Principal or his designee.

- d. It is mandatory however for all parents to inform the school the reason for an absence for which prior permission has not been sought, by sending any email to the class teachers. This will then be reviewed by the Vice Principal. **Kindly note that absences without justification will be treated as Unjustified Absences, and will feature as such on report cards and other permanent school records. The responsibility for catching up with work which has been missed due to non-essential absences lies first and foremost with the student.**

Absences during Tests and Examinations:

ATTENDANCE FOR THESE EXAMINATIONS IS CRITICAL AND WE URGE YOU TO SPEAK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT NOT TAKING THESE LIGHTLY.

ABSENTEES: If your child is sick, please email the class teacher and inform him/ her if your child is going to or has missed an exam/s. Some re-exams might be scheduled over the weekend or on a regular school day, depending on the number of exams missed. If it is the weekend, you will be informed of the day and time to bring your child in for the same. However, children must be prepared to take a missed assessment as soon as they return to school given that they should have already been prepared in advance. Portions and timetables are being shared three months in advance of exams.

Any absence will require a medical certificate to reschedule the assessment, even if the absence is only for ONE DAY. In the absence of a medical certificate, an exam will not be rescheduled, and no marks will be credited for that missed exam. Examinations will not be credited for leave that is not justified. This will impact children's academic progress, and we urge parents not to schedule holidays during working days. LEAVE CAN ONLY BE JUSTIFIED FOR A MEDICAL EMERGENCY (OF THE CHILD IN QUESTION) WITH A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE CLEARLY SPECIFYING THE DAY/ DAYS OF LEAVE OR A BEREAVEMENT EMERGENCY (reasonable days as per government regulations)

Assessments will not be credited for leave that is not justified. This will impact children's academic progress and parents are urged not to schedule holidays during this time.

Students must not have any unauthorised material during an assessment – notes, chits of paper with written notes, any written notes concealed in the desk or on the person. If any of these are found with a student during an assessment, they will be given a zero. Students must not resort to any form of malpractice during an assessment, they must not speak to any other students during an assessment. Any form of malpractice will lead to being given a zero for that particular assessment.

Persistent Absenteeism

When children are found to be frequently absent then a communication is sent to parents reminding them about the need for regular attendance and asking for an explanation for the frequent absenteeism, However if the absenteeism persists, then parents are called in for a meeting to discuss the reason for the frequent absenteeism and to try to resolve the situation.



Students whose attendance falls below 96% will be set targets for improvement and a letter sent home to their Parents. These targets will be regularly reviewed by the school.

- As per ministry policy, if a child is absent for more than 20 consecutive days, and without valid reason or without informing the school, SMCHS, Dubai will inform KHDA.
- Students may be expelled if absent from School for no reason or for unacceptable reason for 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days after obtaining KHDA approval

OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE REWARDS AND RECOGNITION:

To promote a culture of high attendance the school will:

- Recognise and reward students with outstanding attendance
- Contact parents in gratitude for their support with outstanding attendance
- Run campaigns / assemblies highlighting the importance of outstanding attendance.

LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DISMISSALS:

Late Arrival

Being on time to school and class is essential for optimum teaching and learning. We at St. Mary's take late arrivals very seriously. The gates will be closed after the **7:10 am** bell rings. Students, who come late, should do so through **Gate Number 4**. **ALL STUDENTS SHOULD BE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE QUADRANGLES / CLASSROOMS BY 7:05 AM SHARP.**

YEARS ONE TO FOUR (LATE ARRIVAL)

If the children are late for specific reasons, their parent must accompany them to the Junior School Reception and get a late slip from the secretary. The school does not accept the responsibility for children who remain in the school grounds after the end of lessons. Parents are asked to collect their children promptly in order to ensure their safety after school. Students must remain inside the school gates while waiting for their parents to collect them.

LATE ARRIVALS (YEARS FIVE THROUGH ELEVEN)

- A student who is late will be permitted to enter class with an official note from the office.
- Students who are frequently late will have their parents contacted.

Students who are late for medical/dental or other appointments with professionals must present a letter from parents. Students late due to illness must present a note from the legal parent/guardian to the office and the student will be admitted to class.

REPEATED LATENESS:

Repeated Lateness (Three or More Times in a Month): The school IT Support team will send an official notification to the parents/guardians, informing them of the repeated lateness and requesting their support in ensuring punctuality. A meeting may be scheduled between the parents, the class teacher or a member of the SLT to discuss barriers to punctuality and develop a plan to improve attendance.

Further Lateness After Notification: If lateness continues after the initial notification and meeting, a second letter will be issued, and the student may be withdrawn from PE lessons for that week.

Persistent Lateness (Ten or More Late Arrivals in a Term): The case will be escalated to the Senior Leadership Team. A formal meeting will be scheduled with the parents/guardians to review the situation and discuss further interventions. The student's lateness record may have to be reported to KHDA as per regulator's requirements.

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND REPORTED HEAVY TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The safety and wellbeing of our students and staff are of paramount importance. Adverse weather conditions, such as heavy rain, extreme foggy conditions, or extreme temperatures, can pose significant risks. In such circumstances, the school will take appropriate actions as outlined below:

Late Arrivals Due to Adverse Weather: Students arriving late to school on days with adverse weather conditions (e.g., heavy fog or rain) will not be penalised. Parents are encouraged to prioritise safety over punctuality and inform the school of any expected delays. The school will use its discretion to excuse late arrivals caused by severe weather.

Late Arrivals Due to reported heavy traffic congestion: Students arriving late to school on days with reported heavy traffic congestion will not be penalised. Parents are encouraged to prioritise safety over punctuality and inform the school of any expected delays. The school will use its discretion to excuse late arrivals caused by severe traffic jams and roadblocks.



Early Dismissal

Students needing to leave before the end of the school day must present a note from a parent/guardian to the Principal's secretary. This note must include a date, time, the student's name, and the reason for leaving. Notes will be confirmed with a parent/guardian before the student is released. Notes must be dropped off at the Administration Office before the school day starts.

Students who need to leave school early must be collected by a parent or guardian. No child from year 1-11 will be allowed to leave the school unless accompanied by an adult. The parent or guardian must enter the school and collect the child from the Reception area. An exit slip will be given to the parent which must be handed over the security personnel on duty.

COLLECTION OF PRIMARY STUDENTS

At the end of the school day, students must not go outside the school gates when waiting for their parents; they must stay inside the gates, well within the playground. **Parents are requested to collect their children from Gate No. 5. They are also requested not to collect their children early, unless it is absolutely necessary.**

Relationship to other policies, guidelines, statements

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- PSHE and Moral Education topics
- Health and Safety Policy

Review Date :	September 2026
Next Review Date:	August 2027



SCHOOL TIMINGS

DROP OFF & PICK UP

- School timings are 7:10 AM until 1:50 PM from Mondays to Thursdays and 7:10 AM to 11:15 AM on Fridays.
- All students must be on the premises by 7:05 AM SHARP.
- Please note that no permission can be given for early dismissal or late arrival for students using public transport.
- Parents will not be allowed to drop off or pick up their children directly from the classrooms with effect from Monday, 14th September 2026.
- **Parents of Year 1 Own-Transport students** must now drop their children only at Gate 5. You are no longer permitted to drop them off at the classroom.
- **Parents of newly admitted Own-Transport students to Year 2 and 3 and 4** must also drop their children at Gate 5.
- **OWN TRANSPORT PARENTS TO ACCESS GATE NO. 5.**
- Years 1-3 pick-up time for own transport is 1:40 PM from Mondays to Thursdays and 11:05 AM on Fridays.
- Own-transport parents are advised to meet their children in the designated Holding Area. Year 1--in front of the Primary Reception; next to Gate 5; Years 2 to 4- in the Girls Quadrangle.
- Year 4 to 6 pick-up time is at 1:50 PM from Mondays to Thursdays and 11:10 AM on Fridays.
- Students using the Metro must use GATE NO. 4.

Recently, we have noticed that several students are being dropped too early in the morning, sometimes even a whole hour before the start of the school day. It is important to note that our security and support staff are busy readying the building and the rooms for the school day and therefore children this early cannot be adequately supervised.

In order to ensure that every child is safe we have revised our gate timings as well as certain other procedures to ensure better supervision of children for their safety and well-being.

GATE NUMBER	OPENING TIME ARRIVAL	CLOSING TIME ARRIVAL	FOR WHOM?
FIVE	6:30 AM	7:15 AM	Own transport students
THREE	6:40 AM	7: 10 AM	Strictly only STS Bus users - Bus ID will be checked
FOUR-MAIN SCHOOL GATE	6:25 AM	7:10 AM Large Gate (Only side entrance open for late comers).	Students who use public transport or who walk home.
ACCESS VIA BOYS BASKETBALL COURT	6:40 AM	Depending on STS bus arrival	Strictly only STS Bus users - Bus ID will be checked
ACCESS via IT OFFICE PASSAGE	ONLY FOR STAFF	NA	Only for Staff

GATE NUMBER	OPENING TIME DISPERSAL	CLOSING TIME DISPERSAL	FOR WHOM?
FIVE	1:35 PM 11:00 AM (FRI)	2:10 PM 11:30 AM (Fri)	Own transport students
THREE	1:35 PM 11:00 AM (FRI)	2:10 PM 11:30 AM (Fri)	Strictly only STS Bus users.
FOUR-MAIN SCHOOL GATE	1:35 PM 11:00 AM (FRI)	2:10 PM -Large Gate 11:30 AM (Fri) (Only side entrance open).	Students who use public transport or who walk home.
ACCESS VIA BOYS BASKETBALL COURT	1:35 PM 11:00 AM(FRI)	2:10 PM 11:30 AM(Fri)	STS students and others.
ACCESS via IT OFFICE PASSAGE	ONLY FOR STAFF	NA	Only for Staff

HOW WILL THIS WORK AT ARRIVAL TIME?

- STS students will remain on the bus with the Bus Guardians until 6:40 AM even if the bus reaches slightly earlier.
- Students who arrive before 6:40 AM will remain in the outside Holding Area (Boys Basketball Court / Boys' quadrangle and area just inside of Gate 5).
- Students will only be sent to class at 6:45 AM.
- NO CHILD MUST EVER BE DROPPED OFF/ LEFT OUTSIDE A CLOSED GATE BY A PARENT as this is a serious safety issue and puts a child at risk.
- Parents are advised to adjust their commute times to be in-line with these arrival procedures.
- Children must not be left unattended outside the school area.
- NO DOUBLE PARKING OUTSIDE THE GATE OR NEARBY OR YOU RISK SERIOUS FINES FROM DUBAI POLICE.

HOW WILL THIS WORK AT DISPERSAL TIME?

- Parents who come to pick up their children from school will only be allowed to enter the school premises through Gate 4 and 5 and only at 1:35 PM. This is being done with the safety and security of the children in mind.
- Parents MUST remain in the Holding Area advised by those staff near the gate.
- NO DOUBLE PARKING OUTSIDE THE GATE OR NEARBY OR YOU RISK SERIOUS FINES FROM DUBAI POLICE.

August 2026							September 2026							October 2026							November 2026						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4							1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13								2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20														
17	18	19	20	21	22	23																					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	21	22	23	24	25	26	27														
31							28	29	30																		
School Days: 1							School Days: 22							School Days: 17							School Days: 21						

December 2026							January 2027							February 2027							March 2027						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3														
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
School Days: 6							School Days: 20							School Days: 20							School Days: 18						

April 2027							May 2027							June 2027							July 2027						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
-	-	-	1	2	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
School Days: 17							School Days: 19							School Days: 22							School Days: 2						

Total days

Academic Year (Total School Days) (Minimum days required to submit the calendar is 185)

The total number of days that students formally attend school and includes instructional days, examinations, academic and non-academic activities.

185

Events descriptions				
Icon	Event/Definition	Academic / School Days?	Max. No of days	Mandatory/Optional
	Summer break Summer break for students	No	Range of days	*Mandatory for April start schools.
	Winter break Winter break for students	No	Range of days	*Mandatory.
	Spring break Spring break for students	No	Range of days	*Mandatory for Sept start schools
	First midterm break (MoE Schools) Summer break for students	No		Optional
	Second midterm break (MoE Schools) Summer break for students	No		Optional
	Third midterm break (MoE Schools) Summer break for students	No		Optional
	First midterm break Summer break for students	No		Optional
	Second midterm break Summer break for students	No		Optional
	First academic day for pre-primary students The first day of the academic year for pre-primary students (do not use after winter and spring breaks)	Yes	Start date (1 day)	Optional
	Last academic day for pre-primary students The last day of the academic year for pre-primary students (do not use before winter and spring breaks)	Yes	Last date (1 day)	Optional
	First academic day for students The first day of the academic year for students	Yes	Start date (1 day)	*Mandatory
	Last academic day for students The last day of the academic year for students	Yes	Last date (1 day)	*Mandatory
	First working day of the year for teachers The first day of the academic year for teachers	N/A	Start date (1 day)	*Mandatory
	Last working day of the year for teachers The last day of the academic year for teachers	N/A	Last date (1 day)	*Mandatory
	External examination days during which there is no formal teaching Examination/assessment days fixed by examination boards (for example, IGCSE, IB, CBSE, A-level etc.). Please specify the grade(s)/year(s)	Yes	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	Internal examination days during which there is no formal teaching Examination/assessment days organized and conducted by the school. Please specify the grade(s)/year(s)	Yes	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	Internal examinations occurring in parallel with regular classes A regular school day during which internal examination/assessment takes place. Please specify the grade(s)/year(s).	Yes	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	External examinations occurring in parallel with regular classes A regular school day during which external examination/assessment takes place. (e.g. National Agenda assessments, ASSET, GL tests, MAP tests, IELTS etc.). Please specify the grade(s)/year(s).	Yes	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	Parent Teacher Conference Days for parent teacher meeting. Please specify the schedule and the grade(s)/year(s).	Yes	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	Principal/ superintendent unavailability Days when the principal/superintendent of the school is unavailable for any reason (e.g., recruitment days, conferences, training, etc)	N/A	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	Unavailability of any grade(s)/year(s) due to educational purposes for students Days when students are away on educational mission or field trips (Please specify the grade(s)/year(s) and the event). Kindly refer to KHDA guidelines for trips and events.	Yes	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	Other school holidays Any other holiday (not public holiday) in which the school is off and/or students are not in school	No	Range of days	Optional
	Government holidays Any tentative public holiday whose exact dates will be announced by the government of the UAE. These holidays can be communicated to parents on a tentative basis in which the school is off, but must not be confirmed until officially declared by the UAE government.	No	Range of days	Optional
	Other events Any other events in school occurring in parallel with regular classes; such as celebrations, graduation of a phase, sport day etc. (Please specify)	Yes	Range of days	Optional, but Comment is mandatory to fill
	Professional Development (Students are in School) Days for continuous professional development and training for staff when students are in school	Yes	Range of days	Optional