



**St Augustine of Canterbury  
Catholic Primary School**

# Attendance Policy

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*“Created by God to love and learn”*

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## Document Information

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## Pupil Attendance Policy 2021

### **Mission Statement**

St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School provides an education that inspires and nurtures God's children to succeed to their full potential as we are...

*"Created by God to love and learn"*

### **Introduction**

It is important that parents and pupils develop a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that children do not miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities of reliability are also important in adult life.

Poor attendance, especially when condoned by parents, disrupts a child's education. This causes a lack of continuity and progression in school work and can establish patterns of behaviour which may lead to long-term truancy.

At St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, we will work closely with other partners to ensure this policy is fulfilled including the Department for Education (DfE), the Education Welfare Service (EWO) and the Ethnic Minority Traveler Achievement Service (EMTAS).

### **Aim**

This policy aims to improve pupils' attendance at school and to ensure that absence from school only occurs when pupils have a genuine reason.

This policy aims to help parents/ carers understand the importance of regular school attendance to pupils' educational success and seeks to gain the support of parents in its implementation.

### **Legislative Framework**

Parents/ carers, schools and the Local Authority have legal responsibilities in ensuring that children attend school.

Parents/ carers of children of compulsory school age must ensure that their children receive an efficient and full-time education, either at school or otherwise (Education Act 2011).

Schools must maintain an attendance register in which each pupil is marked present or absent at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Schools must publish attendance data showing the number of unauthorised absences in each term of the preceding school year, expressed as a percentage of the total number of possible attendances that term The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

### Guide to Attendance figures

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Very poor
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable

### Roles and Responsibilities:

#### Headteacher

- a) The Headteacher must ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements e.g. the maintenance of registers and the submission of all data.
- b) The Headteacher will make sure that effective monitoring, support and intervention is in place for children whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.
- c) It is only the Headteacher of the school that can authorise absences and requests for Holidays in exceptional circumstances where children have a history of very good attendance.

#### Governors

The governing body has responsibility for setting the school's attendance target and monitoring of the school's attendance rate.

#### Parents and Carers

It is the law that parents or carers must ensure that their child (ren) attend school regularly and punctually. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents or carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their child (ren)'s absence from school is a significant cause for concern. **The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) defines 'regular' as every day the school is open.**

## Engaging with Parents and Carers

We believe regular attendance is so important in ensuring best outcomes for our pupils that we will review our attendance performance each term. We will regularly look at the pupils where there is a pattern of absence. Where a child has a pattern of Broken Weeks we will contact parent/ carers and may arrange to meet and review progress. There is clear national evidence that children who are on Free School Meals attend less than non-Free School Meals pupils. We will ensure that support to ensure attendance of all pupils who are on FSM is prioritised.

### Threshold for Parent Contact

Action will be taken to engage with parent/ carers (letters to invite parents/ carers to an informal/ formal meeting, letters referring to future invite if pattern continues):

1. Where there are five broken or incomplete weeks in each old-style term (Autumn, Spring, Summer). A broken week is one where there is at least one late or absence mark in the register.
2. Where attendance is below 96% over a term.
3. Where there have been repeat late or U (late after registers close) code marks with or without other attendance concerns.

For example

Threshold for parent engagement *	Term 1-2	Term 1-4	Term 1-6
Broken Weeks	5 Broken Weeks	10 Broken Weeks	15 Broken Weeks
Percentage	95.9% or lower	95.9% or lower	95.9% or lower

### Non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education

Procedures in this policy take in to consideration statutory and non-statutory guidance from the (DfE) and Local Authority (LA).

### Daily/ Weekly Attendance Procedure

- If your child is going to be absent from school, the parent/ carer must contact the school before **8:30am** to inform school of the reason for the absence.
- From **9:00am** school registers are checked for any absences for which we have no information.
- School staff will make a call to the parent/ carer if there has been no contact with school regarding the absence.

### Categorising Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 requires schools to determine whether an absence can be deemed to be authorised or whether the child should be regarded as being absent without permission i.e. truanting. In the terms of the legislation it is only the school who can approve the absence, not the parent. Here at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- 1) Pupil illness.

- 2) Pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance.
- 3) Pupil is participating in an approved public performance (a licence needs to be obtained from the Local Authority and copy provided to the school).
- 4) Permission has been granted by the Headteacher through the Absence Request Procedure.
- 5) Pupil is absent following the death of a close family member.
- 6) Pupil has a medical or dental appointment, confirmed with an appointment card/ letter. The child is expected to attend school prior to the appointment or return to school after the appointment - medical or dental appointments should be booked outside of school hours.
- 7) If a pupil is excluded from school.

## Health and Attendance

Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence with supporting information (for example repeat reference to medical aspects by young person, parent/ carer, prescription information, medical appointment cards, information from other health professionals) we will put in place an Individual Health Care Plan in line with St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School Medical Needs Policy.

Where there are occasional absences such as for sickness and diarrhoea, there is no requirement for medical supporting information. If in the case of sickness or diarrhoea, pupils must remain off school for 48 hours from the last bout of illness. For repeat absences, we will follow government guidance and agree to absences where there is appropriate medical supporting information.

## Monitoring Attendance

As a school we monitor all areas of attendance and are required to provide the DfE and LA with our attendance data.

- Individual attendance percentages for the year will be sent out at the end of the school year.
- At the beginning of a new term, the attendance data from the previous term is analysed.
- The parent/ carer of **all** pupils with less than **96%** attendance will be sent a letter and a printout of their child's attendance for that term - unless due to extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- The parent/career of **all** pupils with less than **90%** attendance will be sent a letter and printout of their child's attendance for that term. In addition, the monitoring programme for pupils with attendance percentages between 90% and 80% will be every two weeks rather than termly.

## Persistent Absentees

Pupils whose attendance is less than **80%** are referred to as "Persistent Absentees" by the DfE and will be considered for referral to the EWO and if appropriate EMTAS. The EWO and school staff will then begin a programme of monitoring and support.

- Step 1 – parent/ carer, school staff and the EWO meet to discuss the absences and agree an action plan to improve attendance.

- Step 2 – A letter summarising the discussion and a copy of the action plan is posted to the parent/ carer.
- Step 3 – After 6 weeks, the attendance printout is reviewed by school staff and the EWO.
  - If the percentage has improved to above 80% half-termly monitoring is implemented.
  - If the percentage remains below 80% the parent/ carer is invited to a second meeting with school staff and the EWO to discuss the absences where further, more formal, actions are outlined.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence**

Absence for anything other than through illness or medical reasons during term time is actively discouraged. Parent/ carers requesting time out of school for their child during term time should obtain a 'Leave of absence' request form from the school office before booking a family holiday and return it two weeks prior to the intended absence.

The DfE has published amendments to the Pupil Registration Regulations which came into force from September 2013 and relate to Holidays in Term Time, Penalty Notices and Deletions from the school register. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will define 'exceptional circumstances' and also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Exceptional circumstances shall be determined by the Headteacher on a case by case basis.

Leave of absence will not be granted during September to ensure that pupils have a settled start to the new academic year nor in May or June when all classes have their annual assessments.

## **Absences which are not agreed by the school (Unauthorised)**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 requires parent/ carers to ensure children attend school regularly and punctually. Where patterns of absence or broken weeks have been identified and where there are unauthorised absences, we will seek to engage with parents/ carers and the young person. Where efforts to address attendance have not led to a reduction in unauthorised absence consideration will be given to a formal legal process.

## **Penalty Notices**

In cases where parent/carers take their child on holiday during term time we will follow the LA Code of Conduct and request that a Penalty Notice is issued by the local authority where applicable. Where all or almost all unauthorised absence marks are U coded (late after registration) we will first seek to engage with parents/ carers and the child (ren). If U code absences persist we will request a Penalty Notice in line with the Code.

## **When might a Penalty Notice be issued?**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent/ carer in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions of absence are recorded in 7 school weeks. There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon:

1. where unauthorised absences are recorded
2. where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday are recorded and;
  - a) the parent/ carer has not informed the school within 4 weeks of the intended absence; or



- b) the leave was not authorised; or
  - c) the child did not return on the agreed date
3. where the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed.
4. where a combination of more than 10 sessions of a) to c) above have been recorded.

### **How much is the fine?**

The fine is £60 (per parent/ carer, per child) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

For example, a two-parent family taking 2 children out of school for an unauthorised holiday would be liable for a total of £240 if paid within 21 days or £480 between 21 and 28 days.

The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

Failure to return your child on the agreed date, after a request for a Leave of Absence, could result in a penalty fine of £60 (per parent/ carer, per child) being issued and/or your child losing their place at school.

### **Removal from Roll**

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

If the pupil has left the school without explanation, and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare, we will contact the local Access and Response Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or radicalisation we will contact the Access and Response Team immediately.

If the school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the school has confirmation that the child has started at the new school they will update SIMs. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If the school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Access and Response Team immediately. Please see further information in Children Missing Education Policy <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-and-attendance/children-missing-education/>

### **Part-time timetable**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part-time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs and this decision is made by the Headteacher in consultation with external agencies. A part-time timetable is time limited and must not be treated as a long-term

solution and can only be made with parental agreement. This will be reviewed every two weeks within the time limited period. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

### **Celebrating Success**

We will acknowledge good attendance by class/year group as well as on an individual basis. We will regularly share attendance information, to the school community, via fortnightly newsletters and weekly, to pupils, via Attendance of the Week certificates in Monday's Gospel assembly. Good attendance will also be celebrated each term with certificates issued to those children with 100% attendance and those with 96% attendance or over.

### **Attendance Registration**

We have a legal duty to register all pupils in the attendance register in the morning and afternoon as stipulated in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. School will code according to national guidelines. Where there is a pattern of absence and no clear supporting evidence of acceptable reasons for absence we will mark these absences as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may result in formal legal action being taken by the LA.

### **Punctuality**

We believe that a pupil arriving late will not receive the best outcomes. The Staff and Governors at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School encourage and expect pupils to attend school regularly. By 'regular' our policy states all students are expected to attend school every day the school is open. Regular attendance is linked to high standards of pupil achievement and progress. Arriving late to school regularly has been shown to have a negative impact on a child's social and academic well-being. Lateness disrupts lessons, affects achievement and can create anxiety for those children arriving late. First thing in the morning is important because information is often given out which allows for the smooth running of the day and helps pupils feel part of the school community.

8:40am	Doors open Registers open
8:50am	Doors close (L – late before close of registers)
9:00am	Registers close
9:01am and later	Considered late after register closes (U Code – Unauthorised absence)

- The school opens at 8:40am and pupils are expected to be in school at this time to enable the child time to remove their outdoor clothing and prepare and settle themselves ready to learn. All entrances with the exception of the main school entrance are closed at 8:50am.
- Pupils arriving after 8:50am, will be required to report to the school office where their names and arrival time will be recorded in the late book. This information is recorded for safety reasons and to alert school of patterns of lateness. Pupils arriving between 8:50am and 9:00am will be entered into the register using (L) meaning "Late" before the register closes.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9:01am will be recorded in the register with a U Code. This legal code means the student has an unauthorised absence. A pattern of unauthorised absences U codes can lead to formal action being taken by the LA or a Penalty Notice being issued.
- If pupils are late for school twice in a week, a letter or telephone call may be made to the parent/carers advising them of school's concerns and to request that this improves.

- If no improvement is made and attendance continues to decline the school will invite parents/carers to attend a School Attendance Meeting to discuss concerns and to seek ways to help and implement any support the family may require if appropriate.
- If school attendance continues to further decline and no improvements have been shown the school will seek guidance and involvement from the EWO. The action may involve a home visit to discuss the school's concerns regarding attendance and advise parent/ carers of the duty placed upon them to ensure regular school attendance as stipulated under S444 of the Education Act 1996. We may also ask the EWO to chair an Attendance Panel Meeting in school. This meeting would require attendance from the parent/ carer and would be the first step of the formal legal attendance process.
- If following the Attendance Panel Meeting no improvement has been shown, we will ask the LA to chair an Attendance Panel Review Meeting.

### **Class Registers**

The class teacher has a legal responsibility to take the register at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School uses SIMS as our registration management system and codes according to national guidelines.

**Equality Impact Assessment -Groups that may be affected:**

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact x or n.a.
<b>Age</b> (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		
<b>Disability</b> (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		
<b>Gender reassignment</b> (transsexual)		
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>		
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>		
<b>Racial groups</b> (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)	<b>x</b>	
<b>Religion or belief</b> (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		
<b>Gender</b> (male, female)		
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)		