



Attendance for Learning Policy 2020-2021



St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

"Guided by God, St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School is an inspiring and aspirational community where we learn to love, hope, dream and achieve."

Updated December 2020



“St Gerard’s Catholic Primary and Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”.

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1. Aims

At St. Gerard's Catholic Primary and nursery School we are committed to promoting positive attendance across the school to ensure that children are in school to learn. We aim to achieve a whole school target of at least 96% and celebrate with children who achieve at least 97% over a year (5 days or less of absence during the school year).

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- ◆ Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- ◆ Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- ◆ Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- ◆ The Education Act 1996
- ◆ The Education Act 2002
- ◆ The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- ◆ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- ◆ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- ◆ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- ◆ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- ◆ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- ◆ The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association?

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- ◆ Present
- ◆ Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- ◆ Absent
- ◆ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- ◆ Late
- ◆ Late after registration is closed
- ◆ Medical Appointment (letter to be shown to school)

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- ◆ The original entry
- ◆ The amended entry
- ◆ The reason for the amendment
- ◆ The date on which the amendment was made
- ◆ The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

1. Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.
2. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:15am.
3. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:05pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents may either call in to school, telephone office or complete the absence report on parentapp to make communication regarding absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness and/or the child has been set an attendance target for a period of time.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

1. A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).
2. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).
3. A punctuality target may be set regarding children with a repeated pattern of late arrivals as part of a discussion of support to promote punctuality.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will be provided with a copy of their child's attendance record at each parent's evening as well as in the summer term as part of the annual written end-of-year report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The following may be examples of exceptional circumstances:

1. Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed by the employer.
2. A family member is seriously ill.
3. There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and a leave of absence is deemed appropriate.
4. Leave of absence for children of serving members of the Armed Forces.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

1. Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
2. Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
3. Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a

Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- ◆ A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- ◆ One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- ◆ Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- ◆ If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

At St. Gerard's Catholic Primary & Nursery School we celebrate and promote positive attendance across the school. We do this by:-

- ◆ Contacting parents on the first day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer to ensure the safety of the pupil.
- ◆ Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern
- ◆ Invite parents in to school for a discussion when a pupil's attendance is below 96%.
- ◆ Invite parents to an Attendance Meeting with Principal, Education Welfare Officer where attendance falls below 90%.
- ◆ Consider referral to Education Welfare when school action has failed to bring about an improvement in the pupil's attendance
- ◆ Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties
- ◆ Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion or behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school
- ◆ In partnership with LA use a full range of strategies, including legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance
- ◆ Provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence
- ◆ Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parents evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements
- ◆ Implement a range of rewards for pupils with high levels of attendance and those improving attendance
- ◆ School Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker will complete a home visit if school are unable to ascertain the reason for the absence

6. Attendance monitoring

St. Gerard's Catholic Primary & Nursery School monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to make contact each day a child is ill, unless agreed with the school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we may contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

St. Gerard's uses attendance data to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are any particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer 7

The attendance officer:

- ◆ Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- ◆ Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- ◆ Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- ◆ Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- ◆ Advises the principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy and leave of absence policy.

Appendix 1

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register is closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by school
V	Education trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable

		amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupils absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrives at school after registration is closed
Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is a disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, including the weather, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term, bank holiday or inset day

Appendix 2

Addendum to Model School Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

The implementation of the latest government guidance for the full opening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates adjustments to existing policy and practice. In addition, there are specific changes to the recording of absence during the academic year 2020-21, in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19), which have been outlined by the DFE here and are explained in section 4 of this document.

2. Scope

This addendum applies until further notice. It sets out changes and exceptions to our usual attendance policy. Students, staff and parents should continue to follow our existing attendance policy with respect to anything not covered in this addendum. We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, students and parents.

3. Expectations for Attendance

The latest government guidance states that school attendance is mandatory from September and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- School responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

As a result, we will be reverting back to our usual expectations for attendance as detailed in our Attendance Policy which can be located on the school website

4. Absence Related to COVID-19

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where students cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). To enable consistent recording across all schools, the DFE have added a new category for non-attendance: 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, the circumstances identified as examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply are listed below:

- a) Your child has coronavirus symptoms
- b) Your child has a positive test result for coronavirus
- c) Somebody in your household has coronavirus symptoms
- d) Somebody in your household has a positive test result for coronavirus
- e) NHS 'Test and Trace' have identified your child as a 'close contact' of someone either with coronavirus symptoms or someone with confirmed coronavirus.
- f) Your child has to quarantine as a result of travel
- g) Your child has received medical advice to commence/re-commence shielding

More detail to support parents and carers in these circumstances can be found in Appendix A. In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance due to Covid 19 will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

5. Local Lockdown

If rates of coronavirus rise locally, we may need to prevent some students from attending. We will follow the advice of Public Health England (PHE) or Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) guidance on the measures that will be necessary in the event of a local lockdown.

6. Monitoring Arrangements

We will monitor the effectiveness of these adjustments to our policy through our usual mechanisms which include the regular monitoring and analysis of attendance at both individual and group level. We will use our analysis to intervene at individual student and group level whilst also making any necessary adjustments to the detail in the addendum.

7. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equalities Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting students with medical needs Policy

8. Review

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance from the local authority or Department for Education changes. Any adjustments will be communicated to staff, students and parents.

Addendum to Attendance Policy September 2020

Appendix A: Absence Related to COVID-19 – Guide for Parents

Circumstance	Action needed	Return to school when...	Absence Code
Your child has Coronavirus symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not come to school ▪ Contact school daily ▪ Self-isolate ▪ Get a test 	...the test comes back negative and they are free of the symptoms for 48 hours and no longer feel unwell, they can return to school as long as they are not isolating due to being a contact of a positive case.	X

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform school immediately about test result 		
Your child has a positive test result for coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not come into school ▪ Inform school immediately about test result ▪ Self-isolate for at least 10 days 	...they feel better. They can return to school after 10 days even if they have a cough or loss of smell/taste as these symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection is gone.	X
Somebody in your household has coronavirus symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not come to school ▪ Contact school daily ▪ Self-isolate ▪ Household member to get a test immediately ▪ Inform school immediately about test result 	...the household member receives a negative test result.	X
Somebody in your household has a positive test result for coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not come to school ▪ Contact school daily ▪ Self-isolate for 14 days 	...your child has completed 14 days of self-isolation.	X
NHS 'Test and Trace' or School have identified your child as a 'close contact' of someone with either confirmed coronavirus or coronavirus symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not come to school ▪ Contact school daily ▪ Self-isolate for 14 days 	...your child has completed 14 days of self-isolation.	X
Your child has to quarantine as a result of travel	<p>Before travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not take unauthorised leave in term time ▪ Follow guidance in the school attendance policy relating to authorisation of term time absence ▪ Consider quarantine requirements and Foreign Travel advice when booking travel <p>If quarantine is necessary:</p>	...the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed.	X

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not come to school ▪ Contact school daily ▪ Self-isolate for 14 days 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a member of the household is classed as clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable or is pregnant then the child SHOULD attend school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	...Child to continue to attend school	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child is clinically vulnerable and has not been advised to shield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	...Child to continue to attend school	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any child who is clinically extremely vulnerable AND has medical advice advising to shield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not come to school ▪ Shield until you receive medical advice that the child should return to school. ▪ Parent to provide a copy of shielding letter to school ▪ schools are expected to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools will monitor engagement with this activity. 	..The child is advised by a clinician or Government that they are no longer required to shield	X