



Our Lady of the Assumption

Catholic Primary School

Approved Attendance Policy

Approved by Full Governing Body: 8th December 2020

Signed  Chair of Governors.

To be reviewed: December 2023, or dependent on any legislative changes

Safeguarding Statement:

‘Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all children and expects all staff, parents, governors and volunteers to share this commitment.’

Our Vision

As a Catholic school that puts Christ at the centre, we are committed to encouraging everyone to ‘Be the Best They Can Be’

Values and Ethos

We believe that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God and we value the equality of all, reject discrimination of any kind, and welcome the diversity of different cultures.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

➤ [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)

➤ [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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

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.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Pastoral Manager

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the LA Attendance Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

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

3.5 School admin

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence, make calls to establish why a child is absent and record reasons on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

4.2 Lateness and punctuality

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and if they arrive after the teacher has taken the register they will be marked as late. The register will close at 9.30am after which time they will be marked as absent (late after the register has closed).

4.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.10am at the latest. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will follow up by 9.30am on the first day of absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to all parents annually in the written end-of-year report. Where there are concerns about attendance, parents/carers are notified.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. Parents/carers are required to complete a request for absence form which is followed up by a phone conversation with the Pastoral Manager before a decision is made.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- 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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

As a school we buy into the Local Authority Attendance Team to access specialist support with attendance from an attendance officer. The school's Pastoral Manager works closely with the attendance officer to promote good attendance. The LA Attendance Officer visits the school half termly to review attendance patterns. Children whose attendance is of concern are placed on the targeted children list and their attendance is monitored weekly.

If children's attendance falls below 90% a range of strategies are employed to improve attendance.

- Parents/carers are contacted to discuss any underlying reasons for absence
- Parents receive written notification of low attendance showing pattern and percentage of absence
- Home visit from the school and/or LA Attendance Officer
- Invitation to parent to attend a meeting with the Headteacher or Pastoral Manager to discuss ways of improving attendance
- Collaborative work with the school nurse to work with parents whose children have frequent absences due to medical reasons.
- Referral to Early Help

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, LA Attendance Officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Each term children who have achieved 100% attendance receive a certificate. Children whose attendance is 100% for a whole year receive a gift voucher.
- Each week, the class with the highest attendance is entered into a draw with one child receiving a gift voucher.
- Attendance is reported on the newsletter each week.
- If a class get 100% in a week, the celebrate with party poppers.
- Children are allowed to come into school in non-uniform on their birthday.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Pastoral Manager monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the LA Attendance 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 will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8. Children Missing from Education

If a child fails to attend school without an explanation, the Local Authority Attendance Team will be informed and the school will complete a CME School Referral Form.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Exclusion Policy