

ST GABRIEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Reviewed: October 2025

To be reviewed: October 2026

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable for their age, aptitude and any special educational needs. We recognise that barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates. As a school, we endeavour to build strong, trusting relationships with parents and carers to identify and remove any barriers. Working together, we can support your children to get the most out of their school experience including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- We will endeavour to build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and work in partnership with you to remove them
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and follow up any absence with first day contact/messaging system and where necessary complete home visits to ascertain the whereabouts of children
- Regularly monitor attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support and put effective strategies in place
- Work collaboratively with the local authority when a pupil's attendance is at risk of becoming consistent or severe
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PARENTS OR CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and on time
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason
- Wherever possible make medical, dental or other appointments outside of the school day
- Ensure school is aware of any circumstances at home that may affect your child's attendance
- If you are **regularly** late to collect your children from school, they will be taken to After School Club which will incur a charge that parents are responsible for. This is for your child's safety as there may not be supervision after school hours

- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- If your child is worried about any issues at school let us know
- Do not book holidays in term time, only exceptional circumstances will be authorised
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TIMEKEEPING

Children should come to school every day on time. School has a flexible approach to assist parents with the start of their working day. This allows children to be admitted to the premises from 8.50 am with registers officially opening at 9.10 am. A late book will be kept by school and this will be reviewed regularly. Parents who arrive late regularly will be invited to discuss and explore any reasons for this, with a view to putting into place any support that is required to help improve timekeeping. Persistent late arrival after registers have closed is an unauthorised absence. Any unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice in line with the new national threshold for issuing penalty notices from 19th August 2024.

If you are **regularly** late to collect your children from school, they will be taken to After School Club which will incur a charge that parents are responsible for. This is for your child's safety as there may not be supervision after school hours

REGISTERS

Registers are legal documents and each school day consists of 2 sessions, a morning and afternoon session

- Registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session of learning
- School has a flexible approach to assist parents with the start of their working day and children will be allowed admittance to school from 8.50 am in the morning and the morning session register will open at 9.10 am and close at 9.30 am
- Any child who arrives in school before 9.30 am will receive a late mark 'L' on the register
- Any child who arrives after 9.30 am will receive a 'U' mark on the register - late after the register closes which is considered an unauthorised absence
- All children who arrive in school after the gates have been closed must report to the school office where they will be signed in and the reason for lateness recorded

ABSENCE

- All absences must be explained and reasons coded appropriately on the attendance register in line with national attendance absence codes
- Parents should either phone, e-mail or advise the office in person of the reason for their child's absence
- First day contact will be made if notification of reason for absence has not been received. This will be done either by phone, text message or e-mail
- Should there be any safeguarding concerns a member of school staff may visit the family home to ascertain reasons for absence
- If a reason is not provided and cannot be ascertained by first day contact, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- A record for all absence and reasons for absence is kept along with the need for first day contact

- As a school we want to work with children and families who have a high level of absence to ascertain any additional support that may be required
- Authorised absences are absences through sickness (if attendance is of concern or below 85% medical evidence may be requested), urgent appointments e.g. medical/dental/other and religious observance. This is not an exhaustive list and each request will be considered on a case by case basis

Please note that the power to authorise a child's absence rests entirely with the Headteacher of the school. Parents/carers cannot authorise absence.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

- Every child's attendance is monitored internally by class teachers, senior leadership and Attendance & Welfare Officer. It is also accessed remotely and monitored by the Educational Welfare Service, Local Authority and the Department for Education
- A whole school attendance review is carried out at the end of every half-term which identifies any child with an attendance level of 95% or less as outlined in the new expectations 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance,' (August 2024). We are duty bound to bring this to parents' attention and this is achieved by sending a letter or e-mail plus a full analysis of your child's attendance
- Attendance and absence data will be regularly analysed to identify pupils or cohorts that require additional support
- Should your child's attendance fall beneath 90% because of unspecific medical reasons, we may consider requesting medical evidence before any further absences for illness are authorised
- Class teachers and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator analyse attendance alongside assessment for learning cycles, attainment and in conjunction with support plans and reviews

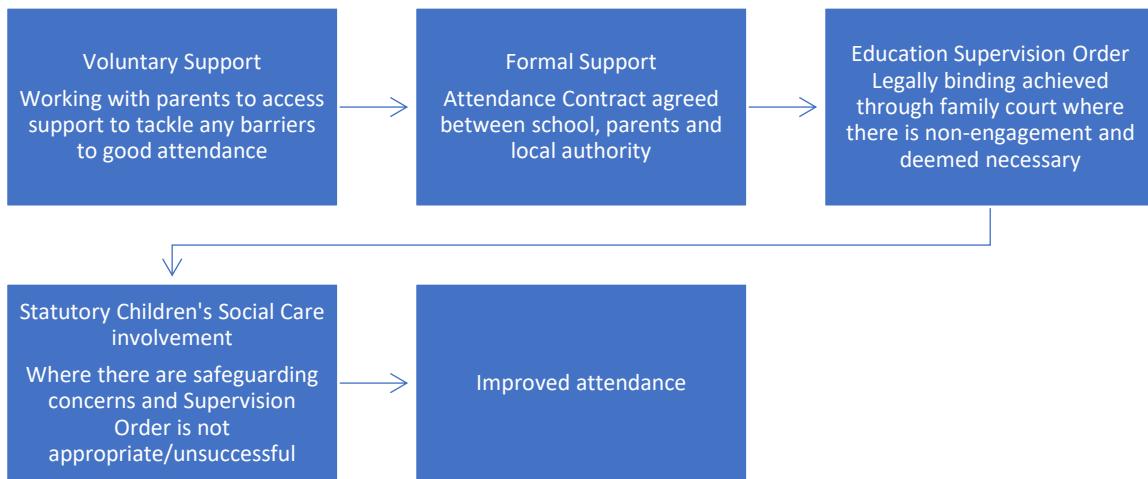
ATTENDANCE CATEGORIES

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 100% - 96% | AS EXPECTED |
| 95% - 91% | AT RISK OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE |
| 90% - 80% | PERSISTENT ABSENCE |
| 79% - 51% | AT RISK OF SEVERE ABSENCE |
| Less than or equal to 50% | SEVERE ABSENCE |

School will work together with families, local authorities and other relevant agencies to put in additional support to identify and remove any barriers where a child is at risk of persistent absence. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by the school, local authority and any other partner agencies and severe absence continues for unauthorised reasons, it is likely to constitute neglect and safeguarding protocols should be followed and legal interventions considered.

ATTENDANCE LEGAL INTERVENTION

Where support and all other avenues have been unsuccessful in improving attendance, school may consider a range of legal interventions, in consultation with the local authority to formalise attendance improvement methods to protect the pupils' right to an education. Decisions to utilise these avenues will be made on an individual case by case basis.



Ultimately, if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at school, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Department for Education makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, a pupil is taking part in a regulated performance or a temporary, time limited part-time timetable has been agreed. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.

Should you wish to request a leave of absence for any of the above reasons, please ask for a form at the school office or download one from our website. This form should be sent to school, wherever possible, in time for the request to be considered and where possible we request at least 3 weeks' notice. If a request is not received before the period of leave begins, it will not be authorised. Parents will be advised in writing whether or not the leave will be authorised and for how long. If it has not been authorised, the letter will provide the reason why.

If you wish to advise school of a period of unauthorised leave (e.g. a holiday), please ask at the school office for a form. Please note that any unauthorised leave may be subject to a Penalty Notice.

PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty notices are issued to parents by the local authority as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. School will consider each family's circumstance on a case by case basis.

The national threshold at which school will consider a penalty notice is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks. A school week means any week in which there is

at least once school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence e.g. 4 sessions (2 days) of holiday in term time plus 6 sessions (3 days) of arriving late after the register has closed - all within the 10 weeks. The sessions can be consecutive e.g. 10 sessions (5 days in one week) or not e.g. 6 sessions (3 days) of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years e.g. 2 sessions (1 day) of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 sessions (4 days) within the Autumn Term.

The National Framework for Penalty Notices does not prevent a penalty notice being used in other cases. This might apply for example where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absences for birthdays or other family events.

NEW TWO-YEAR PENALTY NOTICE LIMIT IN A THREE-YEAR PERIOD

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

The first Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave will be: -

£160 per parent, per child but, can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

If a second Penalty Notice is issued within the three-year rolling programme it will be: -

£160 per parent, per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is £1,000.

NOTICE TO IMPROVE

If the national threshold is met and appropriate support has been put in place and has either not worked or the family have not engaged a Notice to Improve may be issued. This is a final opportunity for parents to engage in support before a Penalty Notice is issued. It will very clearly set out support that has already been provided, opportunities for further support, a clear warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance is not improved within a clear time frame which will be between 3 and 6 weeks. It will also detail what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like and the grounds on which a penalty notice will be issued before the end of the improvement period.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

If there is a concern regarding the immediate safety of a child, Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support Service (SCAS) will be contacted.

When a child is expected to join school and does not arrive, school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and notify the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of a child. An appropriate referral/contact will be made with the Children Missing Education (CME) Team and when advised will remove the child from roll and upload their details to the Schools2Schools database.

In all cases, schools will notify the local authority in line with the De-registration Guidance in place from August 2024.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

If a parent wishes to educate their child at home or other than a school they should notify school in writing that their child will not attend after a certain day. Once that day has passed and there is no school attendance order in place, the child will be removed from roll and the local authority notified.

School will arrange for any child protection records to be passed to the local authority.

PARTNERSHIP

Regular attendance is achieved by a partnership between parents, children and school with the support of the local authority.