



St Catherine Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Governing Body Committee:	Headteacher
Date Ratified:	Sept 2024
Review Date:	Sept 2025



St Catherine Catholic Primary and Nursery School Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school promotes pupils' well-being and gives them the best chance of learning and reaching their potential. Pupils should attend school every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Good attendance is important because pupils:

- get on better with learning and other children;
- cope better with school routines, work and friendships;
- find learning easier because they do not miss out;
- are more successful moving between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training;
- are known to be safe and well by us.

Research shows a direct link between high attendance and doing well at school.

All children have the right to an education. We encourage and expect 100% attendance for all pupils.

We will:

- tell pupils and parents the importance of being at school;
- check that pupils are at school every day;
- follow up and check the absence of persistent non-attenders;
- aim for an attendance rate of at least 97%. Pupils who are under school age, in Nursery or Reception, are treated in the same way as all other children.

Parents:

- by law, must ensure that their child attends school;
- should arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school holidays, whenever possible;

- make sure that their child arrives on time at 8:30am. If they arrive after the allocated time, sign-in at the school office;
- should contact the school on the first day their child is away from school and **each subsequent day thereafter**.

Pupils should arrive and be collected from school on time:

- registration is at 8:30am Pupils go straight to their classroom when they enter the school.
- late arrival can cause children to feel anxious or upset;
- if a child is collected late, after 3.15pm. There may be a charge for this childcare;
- we take the view there are no late children, only late parents;
- we contact parents of pupils who have patterns of lateness to talk about how to arrive and/or be collected on time.

Absence during term-time

Parents should:

- call the school on the first morning of all absences before 9.15am on 01895 442839 telling us the reason for being away;
- send in a note - by hand or email – telling us the reason for being away when they return to school;
- keep in touch by telephone, letter or email, if a child is away from school for a longer period (daily);
- tell us about any planned absences in advance. Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. Complete the 'Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances' form, which is available from the school office and on the school website .

Every half-day absence must be labelled by the school as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. If the school have not been informed as to the reasons for your child's absence then this will be automatically recorded as unauthorised.

Authorised absence

An absence is authorised when parents tell us an allowable reason for being away from school. Allowable reasons include:

- being too unwell to come to school;
- emergency medical or dental appointments;
- religious events, one per year;
- visits to another school, tests or exams;
- any other 'exceptional circumstances' (see page 6).

Unauthorised absence

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away from school for reasons that are not allowed. By law, unauthorised absences are an offence and can be liable to legal action or a fixed penalty fine. Unauthorised reasons include:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily,
- absences that have not been properly explained,
- travel during term-time, including family holidays, that have not been agreed,
- repeated or persistent non-specific illness, for example, 'poorly/unwell',
- absence of other siblings if one child is ill,
- absence because a parent is ill,
- oversleeping,
- inadequate clothing/uniform,
- confusion over school term and holiday dates,
- medical and/or dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason,
- child's and/or family birthdays,
- any routine family event or trip, for example, shopping.
- where the reason for absence is given as illness and occurs either side of a school holiday, medical proof will be sought. Without this proof the absence will not be authorised.

There will be a new National threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered according to the new National Framework for Penalty Notices (see attached).

Attendance codes

This is a list of attendance codes (effective from 19 August 2024)

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
/	Present (AM)	Present for school morning session
\	Present (PM)	Present for school afternoon session
B	Attending any other Approved Education Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity. Not to be used for Virtual learning
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered	Dual registered to another school
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative provision	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Alternative provision provided by LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason absence not yet established
O	Absence in other or unknown circumstance	Absence in other or unknown circumstance
P	Participating in sports activity	Participating in sports activity
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance	Religious observance
S	Study leave for public examination	Study leave for public examination
T	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers closed)	Late (after registers closed)
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience	Attending work experience
X	Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil	Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil
Y1	Unable to attend – Transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel emergency	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole schools' site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil not on roll	Prospective pupil not on admission requester
#	Planned whole school closure	Planned whole school closure

This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code:

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
B	Educated off-site (not Dual-Reg)	Attending any other approved educational facility.
K	Alternative provision provided by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Y7	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.

Retired Codes no longer in use after 19th August 2024

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.
J	Interview	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance
Y	Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance

The law

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children are properly educated. When your child is registered at a school, parents, carers or guardians must ensure the regular and full-time attendance of their child. The Local Authority has the power to issue Fixed-Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absences. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent and for each child. In accordance with the new National Framework for Penalty Notices the penalty charge will be £160 payable within 28 days, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days. If absence is repeated a straight fine of £160 per parent per child will be issued. For a third offence within a 3 year rolling period the Local Authority will consider other enforcement options available to them.

For term-time pupil absences, the Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed all references to 'family holidays' and 'extended leave' as well as the 'notional threshold of 10 school days' authorised absence.

The 2013 amendments made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The regulations also state that head teachers should determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school if leave is given for 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances

This information seeks to help clarify the meaning of 'exceptional circumstances' and outline some guiding principles to aid the head teacher's decision-making process while giving parents a consistent and fair approach to requests for any term-time absence.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

Guiding principles

1. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. The head teacher will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
2. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.

3. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event, for example:
 1.
 - a. holidays or other travel, including as a result of parental work commitments, are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances';
 - b. leave which is taken because of the availability of cheaper fares or other costs are not regarded as exceptional circumstances;
 - c. claims of illness as a reason for a delayed return, particularly after normal school holidays will not be considered unless accompanied by travel tickets dated before the school opens or other agreed dates. Medical documentation from abroad will not normally be accepted unless accompanied by travel documents indicating travel dates prior to school reopening.
 2. Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but for the funeral service and travelling time only, not for extended leave. Absence will only be authorised if the head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
 3. Absences to attend parents' own wedding may be exceptional if the head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the head teacher may use his discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.
 4. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account, but only for the ceremony and travelling time, again, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
 5. The needs of the families of service personnel will be taken into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
 6. Reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities will be made and may result in a leave being granted as an exceptional circumstance.
 7. Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis, including where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

When making absence-related decisions, the head teacher will consider:

- a. a pupil's record of attendance for the current and previous academic years;
- b. time of absence being taken in the school year. If the request is made to extend the beginning or end of a school holiday period, it is unlikely to be considered exceptional.

The head teacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised.

The following factors may also help the head teacher to reach a decision:

- number of school days being missed;
- any exceptional term-time leave requested and/or taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose;
- whether alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent to limit the time away from school;
- impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family, for example, family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN;
- the potential impact that the absence will have on the child;
- whether the absence falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

How to tell us about exceptional circumstances:

- A parent should complete an application form for term-time at the earliest opportunity. The parent with whom the pupil normally resides must make the application.
- Leave may only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and the permission given.
- Tickets and/or other travel arrangements should not be booked prior to discussion with and agreement of the school.
- Parents should not confuse telling the school with having permission.
- Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences are an offence and can be liable to legal action or a fixed penalty fine.
- Extended absences may put your child's school place at risk.
- In the event of an emergency when you have to take leave urgently, taking children, then you should inform the school or have the school informed immediately. Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively and evidence other than your word may be asked for.

Action for low attendance

Not coming to school is a serious concern. However, each case is different and the school knows that there is no standard response. Consideration is

given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to use.

- In every case, early intervention is needed to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- Prior to the engagement of Hillingdon Attendance Team, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It may also set up a parent meeting to discuss the pupil's absence and agree a 'parenting contract' which will include an agreed plan to improve absence moving forward. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for involvement of the Hillingdon Attendance Team.

Attendance levels

Attendance levels show our expectations and what happens next:

- 97%+, expected attendance. This will help all aspects of a child's achievement and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
- 97-91%, below expected attendance. As attendance falls, our concern increases. We follow our stepped approach to take action.
- 90% or lower, persistent absence. Absence is causing serious concern. It is highly likely to affect attainment and progress and is disruptive to the child's learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Hillingdon Attendance Team. A Fixed Penalty Notice will be considered where absence is not authorised.
- 50% or lower, severely absent. This will necessitate the involvement of the Attendance Team at Hillingdon.

For all children, we have a stepped approach to taking action. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed.

- staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully;
- where there has been no contact from parents, we will initiate first day calling for all pupils;
- for pupils with attendance below 90% there will be a discussion with the Hillingdon Attendance Team at our regular attendance review meetings;
- we will monitor trends in pupil attendance and punctuality, including our vulnerable groups;
- we will request for parent/carer to meet school staff;

- if appropriate, will initiate procedures to access support from other agencies.

The Hillingdon Attendance Team actions may include:

- home visits,
- multi agency meetings,
- sign posting to supportive agencies,
- issue a Fixed Penalty Notice,
- court action for poor attendance.

Leavers and Children Missing in Education

The school has a responsibility to safeguard pupils from harm. This includes knowing and taking reasonable steps to check the destinations of leavers. If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6, parents should:

- give the school full information about their plans including
 - date of move,
 - name of new school,
 - new home address,
 - the start date at the new school if known,
 - and reasons for moving (a form is available at the school office),
- confirm the school has your current mobile phone number,
- let us know when you move.

When pupils leave and parents have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact the parent, then a child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations to try to track and locate the child. Telling us leaving details saves unnecessary investigations.

Rewards for positive attendance

The main benefit of regular attendance is continuity and progression in learning. We promote positive attendance through:

- Individual children, certificates are awarded at the end of each school year for 100% attendance. This is celebrated in the final whole school assembly.
- Weekly award (Attendance Cup) issued for the class with the highest attendance, also published in our newsletter. The class with the best attendance over a half term is rewarded with an own clothes day.
-

Monitoring

Summary attendance information is reported to Governors at least termly by the Head teacher.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St Catherine Catholic school and Nursery has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

The school will:

- Look at weekly attendance figures given from attendance officer.
- Phone parents of children who are absent and have an attendance below 97%. (Look at the spreadsheet detailing reasons for absence before phoning).
- Discuss the reason the child is absent with the parent when appropriate.
- Share attendance data (and potential impact on attainment/progress) with Parents at termly Parent's Evenings.
- Encourage parents to send pupil back to school as soon as they can. Pupils may be able to attend in the afternoon session e.g. if 48 hours after vomiting finished at 12 pm then child will be able to attend the afternoon session.
- Log any concerns regarding attendance on CPOMS.

The attendance Officer will

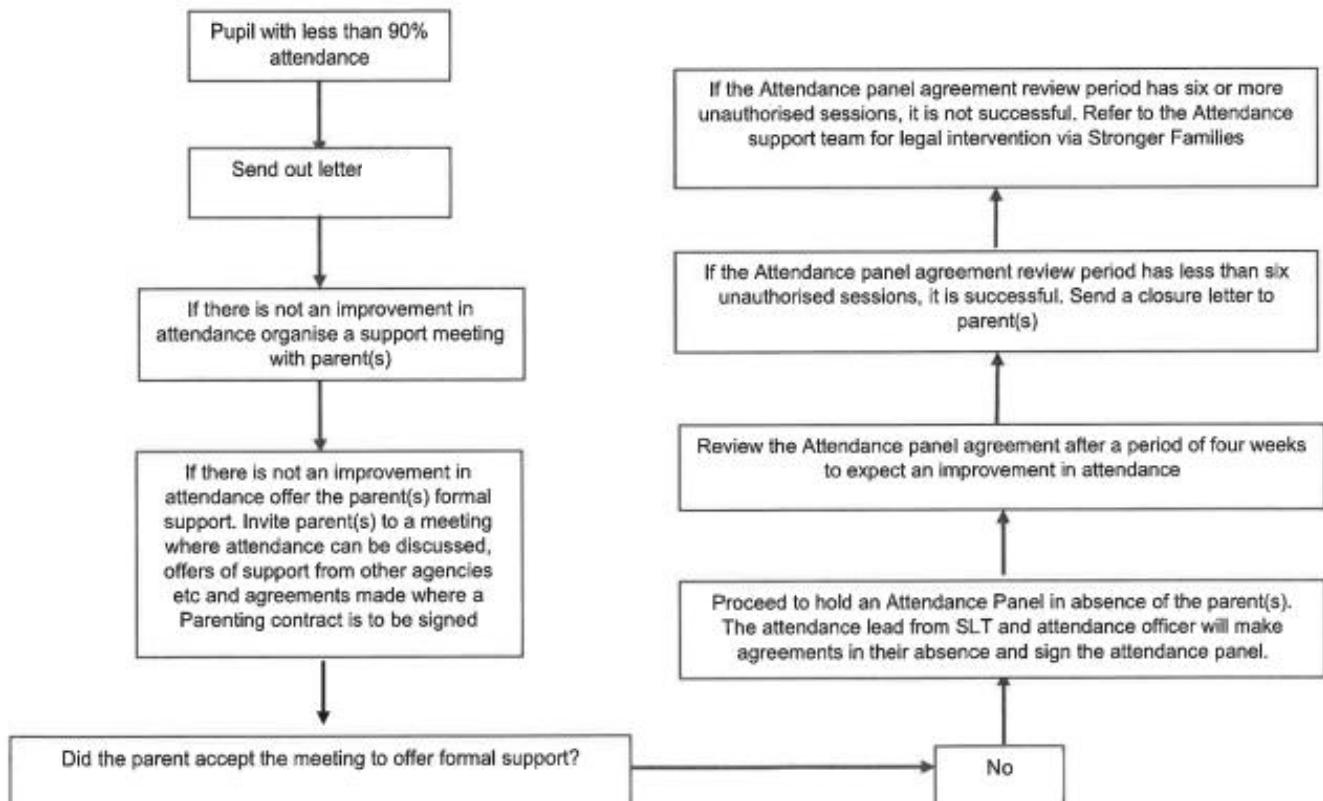
- Alert class teacher and SLT if any punctuality/ attendance trends are noticed.
- Alert headteacher if a child's absence is unauthorised.
- Make a note in the attendance diary of any absent children, record parental contact e.g phone call or email. The diary will have the date, the child's first and surname, the reason for absence, the number of days absent e.g., number 1 if this is the first day. This diary will be kept in a secure area within the school.
- Ensure above information is put on an CPOMS and shared with all relevant teaching staff.
- Encourage parents to send pupil back to school as soon as they can. Pupils may be able to attend in the afternoon session e.g., if 48 hours

after vomiting finished at 12 pm then child will be able to attend the afternoon session.

- Ensure contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these 'N' codes are reported to the headteacher or in their absence the SLT daily.
- Make sure contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the 'N' code. Any 'N' codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If no contact is made then a home visit may be conducted on the first day of absence following advice from the Attendance team.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 97% parents will be made aware of this.
- If a pupil's attendance persistently falls below 92 % a letter will be sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the parents may be asked to make an appointment to speak to the attendance officer or SLT (not head teacher)
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% a letter is sent home explaining that this level of attendance is considered persistently absent, and the parents are asked to make an appointment to speak to the head teacher (see Appendix A for clarification of procedures for persistent absence).
- Check that teachers have logged any issues on CPOMS
- Absence rates will be reviewed at least fortnightly with SLT and the school's Attendance Officer.

Appendix A

Formal interventions that are to be held by the school – Attendance panel flowchart



Formal interventions that are to be held by the school – Parenting contract flowchart

