



# St Francis

Catholic Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Review Date	September 2023
Signed: G Brown (Head Teacher)	<i>G Brown</i>
Next Review Date	September 2025

At St Francis we want all children to reach their full potential and gain the maximum benefit from the education that we provide. To do this, children must attend school regularly. When children are absent or late, this can create gaps in their education and leave them vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

At St Francis we are committed to working with families to establish the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality. We will act promptly to support children and families if attendance or punctuality is becoming a problem.

### Expectations and responsibilities

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure the regular, full-time attendance of their child/ren. Failure to do this could lead to legal proceedings. We expect that all pupils will attend school every day; they will attend school punctually and appropriately prepared for the school day. Parents/carers should contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.

### Expected level of attendance

We appreciate that there may be times when your child is unwell or absent due to exceptional circumstances. Our attendance target is 97% or more as this is what is needed for children to have the best chance of making good progress.

<b>Above 96%</b>	<b>Less than 6 days absence in a year Good</b>	<b>Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best they can</b>
<b>90%</b>	<b>Around 19 days over a year Concerning – pupils absent for 10% or more are classified as a persistent absentee</b>	<b>Your child will need to spend time catching up with missed work to achieve their goals</b>
<b>Below 85%</b>	<b>More than 29 days over a year Very concerning</b>	<b>Cause for concern, children will struggle to keep up and attainment is likely to be affected.</b>

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.

When attendance falls below 90% over a 6-week period or the child is absent for 3 days (6 sessions) or more on separate occasions over a 6-week period, the school will contact parents either by phone or in writing to offer support in order to improve attendance. If this does not improve over the next term, school will request a meeting with parents and other agencies may become involved. The table below sets out the support and escalation process.

Concerning attendance – attendance below 90% in 6 week period or the child is absent for 3 days (6 sessions) or more on separate occasions over a 6-week period,	Letter to parents
No improvement in concerning attendance	Meeting with parents/head teacher
Declining attendance or no improvement	Home visits and involvement of welfare officer
Further declining attendance or no improvement	Legal proceedings / fines

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance levels at each parents' evening and on their child's annual report.

If your child has an exceptional circumstance which may affect their attendance or punctuality, it is important to let school know about this, so arrangements can be made and support offered.

### **Punctuality**

We understand that occasionally things may occur out of parents control, that cause children to be late for school. However, when lateness is frequent this can have a serious impact on children's progress. Even a few minutes a day can add up to full days over the year and cause gaps in children's knowledge. It prevents children starting the day on the best possible footing and may take them longer to settle. It can also disrupt the class and teaching in progress. It is therefore very important that children are on time for school.

Children come into school from 8:45am. Morning registration takes place at 8.55am and pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school. Registers close at 9.15am and after this lateness, without a valid reason, is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Afternoon registration is taken at 1:00pm. Teachers are required by law to complete attendance registers and use the DfE attendance codes to record categories of attendance or absence (see appendix1).

Punctuality is monitored closely. Children arriving after 9:00 will be recorded in the late book and more than 5 incidents of lateness over a 6 week period will trigger the following response:

Concerning punctuality – 3 or more incidents over a 6 week period.	Phone call to parents to discuss causes and offer support – logged on child's file
No improvement in concerning punctuality	Letter to parents – logged on child's file
No improvement in concerning punctuality	Meeting with Parents, head teacher
Further declining punctuality or no improvement	Involvement of external agencies

## **Reporting absence**

It is very important that you let school know if your child is going to be absent as we need to account for all children as part of our safeguarding responsibilities. Please notify the office by phone or in person by 9:30am on each day of your child's absence unless you have informed us of the length of absence. Please note school will not accept reasons for absence from pupils or siblings. Reasons for absence must be provided by a parent or carer. If we have not heard from parents to explain the absence, we will contact the parent/carers by phone. If we cannot contact the parent /carer to get an explanation for the absence this will be classed as unauthorised. If we can't get in contact with parents after 3 consecutive days of absence, school will contact the Local Authority as this would be a safeguarding concern.

It is extremely important we have the correct contact details to allow us to contact you; both in the case of an emergency and with regards to attendance. We give parents the opportunity to come into school and make changes to contact information at any time as well as conducting data collection throughout the year.

If your child has a significant level of absence due to illness or medicals, we will ask you to produce medical evidence. If this cannot be provided, the absence/s will be unauthorised and this could lead to further action.

## **Holidays/ extended leave of absence during term time**

As of the 1 September 2013, schools are not able to grant any leave of absence for family holidays, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' which support the request being made. Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absences will be coded as unauthorised, and as such Head Teachers may request that the Local Authority issues a penalty notice. The school holiday dates are published at least a year in advance so family holidays can be planned around these.

The School and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and development. It is for this reason that non attendances (however short or infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction nonattendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.

When considering whether the circumstances for the leave of absence can be authorised, the school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. To request a holiday or absence, parents must complete the yellow foreseen absence form available from outside the school office. A reply slip stating whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised will then be sent home with your child.

If your child has unauthorised leave of absence /holiday you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or, your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court for the purposes of a criminal prosecution.

## **Examples of authorised/unauthorised absence**

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.

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Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
Genuine illness of the pupil Hospital/dental/doctor’s appointment for the pupil Major religious observances Bereavement Attending a funeral Visits to prospective new schools External exams or educational assessments Approved sporting, cultural competitive activity	Holidays in term time Shopping/day trip/visit to theme park A birthday treat Oversleeping Appointments for other family members Siblings being unwell and not attending

### **Pupils leaving school during the school day**

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school. Parents are requested to complete the yellow foreseen absence request form for any pupil leaving during the school day. Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return. Where a pupil is being collected from the school, within school hours, parents are to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site. On their return, they must report to the school office so staff know they have returned to school. If your child has a medical appointment at any time during the school day, a copy of the appointment card/letter will be requested. However, where possible, please make appointments outside of the school day.

If they have a sibling in school please make arrangements for the sibling who does not have an appointment to be in school at the start of the school day / collected from school at the usual finishing time of 3:10pm, as we are now unable to authorise their sibling’s absence.

If your child is taken ill during the school day or is unable to come to school due to illness, it is important that any other siblings attend/remain in school otherwise their absence will be marked as unauthorised.

If parent’s have an appointment or are unwell, please also make arrangements for your child to be in school on time and picked up at the end of the school day as we cannot authorise your child’s absence for this reason.

### **Children missing in Education**

The school recognises that children missing education are at risk of underachieving and may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We follow the LA guidelines in monitoring such children. If a child is apparently “missing”, we endeavour to find that child as soon as possible, working with partner agencies, including the Police and Social Care if necessary. Our Pastoral Lead, Mrs Griffiths, works closely with

families to support good attendance. Where there are serious concerns, we work closely with Education Welfare and other agencies to ensure that children are safely in school. Where a child goes missing, we make every attempt to contact the family by phone, letter and home visits. Children missing for more than 10 days MUST be referred to the LA (or earlier where there are existing safeguarding concerns), who will attempt to trace the family.

### **Roles and responsibilities in school**

**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.

#### **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.

#### **The attendance officer**

At St Francis, we do not have an attendance officer but Mrs Griffiths, SENCO and Pastoral lead, has the following responsibilities for attendance:

- 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

#### **Class Teachers**

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis. If a child is absent they must record this on the attendance form and if they do not know the reason for the absence, make it clear that office staff need to ring parents. If the child is a safeguarding concern they must also notify the DSL or deputy DSL the child is absent. Teachers are also responsible for using the correct absence codes (see appendix 1) when completing the absence registers.

#### **Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They should record reasons for lateness and absence and pass these on to class teachers as soon as possible. Where they have not been able to get through to a parent and there are safeguarding concerns, they must notify the DSL straight away.

### **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

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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 has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a 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 employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational 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
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Authorised absence		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day