

# St Catherine's Catholic Primary School



'Let your Light Shine'

## Policy

Date reviewed: July 24

Date of next review: July 25

Date ratified by the Governing Board: July 2024



## **Mission Statement**

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School is a special learning community which strives for excellence, where everyone knows they are loved, where they feel happy and secure and have a positive self-image. As a Catholic school, based on the Gospel and teaching of the Church we recognise the equality and dignity of all people in the eyes of God.

The school's Catholic ethos, which bring a deeper understanding of the Gospel values of trust, respect and dignity, permeates our education endeavors. We aim to create an environment in which Gospel values are exemplified and live out;

- for the children and adults in our school community to achieve their full human potential in all aspects of school life, particularly as one of God's family.
- to develop and encourage effective partnerships and create meaningful interaction between home, school, parish and the wider community.
- to promote equal opportunities and the appreciation of cultural diversity.
- to provide a framework for a way of living within and out with the classroom.
- by celebrating achievement at every level, so that all may feel valued as unique creations of God and recognise their self-worth.

## **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education.
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 The Governing Board of Trustees**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.



- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- The link governor/trustee responsible for attendance is Susan Stoddart and can be contacted via 0191 232 6803.

## 2.2 The Head teacher

The Head teacher 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.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- The Head Teacher is Lisa Hoey and can be contacted via telephone on 0191 2326803 or by email [office@stcatherinesnewcastle.org](mailto:office@stcatherinesnewcastle.org)

## 2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Deputy headteacher Chris Murray who can be contacted via telephone on 0191 2326803 or by email [office@stcatherinesnewcastle.org](mailto:office@stcatherinesnewcastle.org)

## 2.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7).
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.



- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when fixed-penalty notices are issued.

The Attendance Officer is Susan Jenkins who can be contacted on 0191 2326803 or 07506221429. Susan works alongside Rachel Wells, a designated colleague from the LA Access and Inclusion team.

## **2.5 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 by 9am.

## **2.6 School Office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Headteacher or Attendance Officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

## **2.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.50am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If an appointment cannot be made at these times, then your child should be brought back to school after the appointment, or brought to school before, which ever applies to the timing of the appointment. Provide medical evidence, if possible, indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor, or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation arises. This might include an appointment note or an NHS App message.
- Book family holidays during school holiday time.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g., if a car breaks down, if an urgent appointment has been made.



Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the Head Teacher creates an offence in law.

## **2.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

## **3. Recording attendance**

### **3.1 Attendance register**

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

We will take our attendance register 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.

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 I for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- The classroom doors open from 8.40 am on each school day.



- The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am.
- Pupils arriving after 8.50pm will be coded L on the register (The pupil arrives late before the register has closed).
- Pupils arriving after 9.20am will be coded U on the register (The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session).
- The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm for KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2 and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Parents/carers can notify school by phone or by leaving a voicemail message.

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 another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

### **3.3 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.

When requesting appointments, parents can use the NHS app, medical letters or appointment cards as evidence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside 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.

### **3.4 Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.



- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals after 30 minutes from the start of the session. This code means your child has a missed mark for that morning, however has been marked present in school.

### 3.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may ask Susan Jenkins our School Attendance officer for support.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school Attendance Officer will make a home visit and will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer from the Access and Inclusion team.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly traffic light letters. If necessary, the School Attendance Officer will follow this up with a telephone conversation or a planned meeting.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' on an individual basis at the Headteacher's discretion.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and before the planned absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of 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.



## 4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e. 15 school days or more) the parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address.

## 4.3 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, for a 1st offence - £160 fine, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. For a 2nd offence, £160 with no reduction for early payment. Then the 3rd offence, a referral to court. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority 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.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Although good attendance is an expectation the school seeks to improve whole school attendance and will recognise those children in the green zone (above 97%) with the following:

- Weekly Best Class Attendance trophy.
- Golden Ticket award prizes (if the child is in on time every day they are entered into a weekly prize draw).
- Annual certificates for pupils in the 'Green Zone'.
- Half termly traffic light letter to help self-improvement of attendance.

## I. Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.





Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels 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.

### **6.1 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

### **6.2 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

### **6.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## **7. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, yearly by Lisa Hoey, Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.



## 8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with pupils and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy.
- Behaviour policy.

## 10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)



## Appendix I: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2024 - [‘Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024’](#)

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



<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>CI</b>	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
<b>C2</b>	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
<b>E</b>	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently 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	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>J1</b>	Leave of absence	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	The 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>	Parents travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade
<b>Q</b>	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements made by the local authority
<b>Y1</b>	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance
<b>Y2</b>	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
<b>Y4</b>	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
<b>Y5</b>	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
<b>Y6</b>	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
<b>Y7</b>	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent



<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	The 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	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

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

