



St Alban's Catholic Primary School



At St. Alban's, we are proud to celebrate each individual for all that they are. We are a caring community, enjoying and excelling in the presence of God.

Policy Title: Attendance
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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 responsible for attendance is Dominic Curran and can be contacted via 0191 262 5552 or office@stalbansnewcastle.co.uk

2.2 The headteacher

The headteacher/principal 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 Ciara Yeoman and can be contacted via 0191 262 5552 or office@stalbansnewcastle.co.uk

2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for: Ciara Yeoman

- 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 Ciara Yeoman and can be contacted via 0191 262 5552 or office@stalbansnewcastle.co.uk

2.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analyzing 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 (authorised by the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Susan Jenkins and can be contacted via 0191 262 5552 or office@stalbansnewcastle.co.uk

2.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by **8:50am and 1.20pm**

2.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/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 attendance officer or headteacher or senior leader 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 **9.15am** 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 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- 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.

Pupils must arrive at school by **08:45am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **08:50am** and will be kept open until **9.20am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **12.50pm** and will be kept open until **1.20pm**.

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 **09.15am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin/office staff (see also section 7).

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 unauthorized 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.

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.

With effect from September 2013 the Government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Parents/Carers are encouraged to keep open lines of communication with school over absence as persistent absence can be considered a safeguarding matter. Should parents wish to request a period of absence for their child, a pupil absence request form should be completed (appendix 2).

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed it will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed it will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals 30 minutes after the start of the session

Once the doors are closed at **08:50am** school can only be entered via the school office. Any child who comes into school this way after this time will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L) with the time of arrival and the reason given for the lateness. Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15am when registers close will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

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. Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence contact will be made by the attendance officer or senior leader by requesting these details from parents/carers by 10.30am. The Headteacher is informed of this. If this text is not responded to by 12.00 noon, then the Headteacher and /or Attendance Officer will be informed, and the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code N). Safeguarding procedures are then followed to identify the whereabouts of the child/children.
- 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 will consider involving an education welfare officer

To support families and children and in line with safeguarding arrangements, some children have been identified as vulnerable for a number of individual reasons e.g. parental illness, and a record of these children is held in the office. In the case of one of these children identified as vulnerable, a phone call, rather than a text message, will be made and this will be followed up hourly until contact is made. If no contact has been made by 11.00am then the Headteacher or other Designated person will be informed, and Safeguarding procedures will be followed.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during parent meetings throughout the academic year.

School will also issue staged letters for pupils if they are persistently absent or are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

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 for.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Authorised reasons include:

- Child's illness
- Family bereavement.
- Full day medical appointment/assessment
- Religious observance.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, **not all** absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

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, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or attendance policy. 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 Term time absence for holidays

Any request for leave of absence due to holidays in term time will not be authorised.

The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreational circumstances, and therefore there is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Young people who are absent from school fall behind in their learning. They miss out on school events. Many find it difficult to catch up. In addition, school staff have to divert their attention away from other young people to support those who have fallen behind due to a holiday-related absence.

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days) within 10 school weeks, consideration will be given if a referral should be made to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice to be issued or prosecution where repeated penalty notices have been issued. Where the threshold has not been met in the case of persistent avoidance, for example, repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, the school will have discretion to refer the case to the Local Authority. If in an individual case, the Local Authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

4.3 Extended Leave

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

4.4 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority may issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices or refer to court for prosecution in line with the National Framework where absences were unauthorised and support has been provided but not worked or engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g., an unauthorised holiday in term time).

A penalty notice is an out-of-court settlement intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence. This can be a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, all taken within any 10-school-week period that may span different terms or school years (e.g., 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

From Autumn Term 2024, the Local Authority will only issue 2 penalty notices to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Throughout the school year we will positively promote good attendance in the following ways:

Headteacher newsletter

- Attendance newsletter
- Posters displayed around schools
- Positive praise and encouragement
- Assemblies

6. Attendance monitoring

A variety of methods are used to monitor and evaluate attendance and punctuality across school:

- Weekly monitoring of whole school attendance by attendance lead in school
- Analysis of attendance and punctuality data on individuals, groups, class and whole school with a focus on identifying trends and patterns before issues arise, including monitoring the attendance of classes, groups and individuals who have had attendance issues in previous years to the current academic year
- Regular meetings between the Attendance Officer and the local authority, Attendance Officer and Headteacher, focusing on identifying any actions required

- Regular updates to Governors and monitoring by Governors with a focus on progress towards the school's attendance targets
- Regular discussions with class teachers, support staff and office staff in relation to individual cases or concerns.

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.

6.1 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.

6.2 Analyzing attendance

The school will:

- Analyze 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

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

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

6.4 Reducing persistence 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. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyze 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 2024](#)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.

C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	The pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution.
M	Medical/dental appointment	The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade.
Q	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
Y1	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.
Y2	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
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use

Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	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
Y6	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
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

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

Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

PUPIL HOLIDAY ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

This is a request for a leave of absence to be granted by school for my child/children to go on holiday in term time.

Holiday destination Dates of holiday: From until

Number of school days which will be missed (do not include weekends or school holidays)

Reason for taking holidays in term time

Have you taken any other holidays in term time during this school year? YES/NO If YES, how many school days were missed?

Parent's address Telephone number

Name(s) of parent or guardian..... Signed Date

(please print) Signed Date

To be completed by parent			To be completed by the school that the child attends		
Please list the names and schools of all children who require permission for this holiday.			Permission granted?	Authorised by:	
Name of child (please print)	School	Class or Year Group	Yes/No	Name (please print)	Signed and Dated

This form may be photocopied – permission must be obtained individually for each child from his/her school. Please ensure that each school receives the form in advance of the holiday dates.

Parents - please note that holidays taken in term time without prior permission from school may result in legal sanctions for irregular attendance being taken against you.