Attendance and Punctuality Policy

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

Approved by:	Local Governing Committee
Last reviewed on:	September 2026
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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 fulfill 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 **David Hastie** can be contacted via school on 0191 2860129 office@stcuthbertks.org

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 **Anne Bullerwell** and can be contacted via the school office on 0191 2860129 office@stcuthbertsk.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 **Lucy Clarke** and can be contacted via the school on 0191 2860129 office@stcuthbertsk.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 to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is **Gary Munday** and can be contacted via the 'Access and Inclusion' team on 0191 2774500 accessandinclusion@newcastle.go.uk

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 on that day.

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 designated 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 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return and provide a reason for their absence.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Apply for a 'Leave of Absence' from the Headteacher before taking their child out of school.

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 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8.30am and 8.45am and will be kept open until 8.55am.The register for the second session will be taken between 12.15pm and 1pm.

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 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Where no contact has been made by the parent/carer, the school will issue a text message to contact the school. If no communication is made within 30 minutes, school will ring the first contact provided by the parent/carer. If no communication is established, school will contact the second emergency contact. If no communication is made school will issue an email asking for the parent/carer to contact school as a matter of urgency. If school has any concerns surrounding the well-being of any pupils, school will contact 'Access and

Inclusion' for advice and in some circumstances contact Children's Services. This absence will be marked as unauthorised.

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.

Parents/carers should complete a 'Leave of Absence' form which can be found on the school website or via the school office.

The LOA form will be reviewed by the headteacher and a response provided before the date/specified on the form as long as the parent/carer has submitted this within 7 working days of the date requested. Where a LOA has been requested less than this time, school will endeavour to contact the parent/carer to inform them of the headteacher's decision.

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 and ideally return to school.

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 8.55am.
- Must be accompanied to the school office to complete a 'late register' and provide a reason for arriving late along with the date and time.
- The office will enter this information to the school monitoring system which provides a summary of punctuality/lateness each half term/term.
- This information is monitored and reviewed every half term and where there are concerns, the senior leader responsible for attendance and punctuality will call to discuss any concerns or issues that may be a reason for being late. School will endeavour to work with families to overcome barriers to punctuality and attendance.

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:

- Text and 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 contact the

school's attendance officer for advice, children's services for further advice and to 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 other agencies such as the access and inclusion team/children's services.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels where it falls below 90%. The school's attendance lead/senior leader will telephone in the first instance and then arrange to meet to discuss any concerns in more detail. Attendance will be monitored every 4 weeks for improvement.

The school informs parents/carers about their child's attendance at parents' meetings held in the Autumn and Spring term. This is also shared in the end of year report sent electronically to parents and carers in the Summer term.

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/principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

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 7 working days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school's website or the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence could** 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.
- Family bereavement.
- Excluded children.
- Sport/music exams.
- Educational reasons.

4.2 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.

4.3 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 a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be referred by a headteacher and issued by the 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.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £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 should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. These penalty notices are charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school celebrates the best attendance each week in a celebration assembly. The class with the highest attendance receives a certificate and additional golden time/play time on that day. This information is shared via text to all families within the school community.

Traffic light posters are shared around the school site to promote good attendance and additional information shared on the school website is linked to families within the school community.

Good attendance and school's expectations are shared at parents' evenings and during welcome meetings at the start of each academic year so parents and carers understand the government's expectations for children on roll at school.

6. Attendance monitoring

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 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

6.3 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 in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 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 annually. 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.
- 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

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
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	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 travel 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

Appendix 2: Attendance letter 1

Dear …

Thank you for meeting with the school to discuss …….'s punctuality in November.

School understands that ……..has been unwell recently and has been into hospital. It was good to see him/her in school today, hopefully he/she will continue to feel well and enjoy the next few days in school.

We would like to draw your attention to …….. attendance. The Department for Education's guidance for good attendance is 97%+.

……..attendance is currently 78.13%

As part of St Cuthbert's commitment to your child's education, we monitor attendance very closely using our Traffic Light zoning system. Research has clearly shown that progress and achievement is very closely linked to good attendance, and when a pupil's school attendance falls below 97%, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Good attendance means children learn and achieve more and get the maximum benefit from their education. Whilst school understand that there have been genuine reasons for your child's absences, it is important that home and school work together to provide the very best learning opportunities.



You can help improve your child's attendance by :

- Making sure your child goes to school and arrives on time (between 8.30am and 8.45am)
- Avoiding taking holidays in term time
- Arranging non-urgent medical and dental appointments for after school
- Sharing information around your child's health and well-being with school as early as possible.

We are really pleased to share that St Cuthbert's has access to a School Attendance Officer who is able to support our school and any of our families whose child's attendance is below satisfactory or who are struggling to get their children to school on time. Mrs Clarke will continue to monitor your child's attendance and get in touch with you during the next 4-6 weeks to see if school can support in any way.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 3: Attendance letter 2

Dear [redacted]

RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY SECOND LETTER

As you know, we have been monitoring [redacted] attendance and punctuality since [redacted] This was shared with you via letter.

Throughout each term, schools are expected to monitor and support each pupil into school so they can access their curriculum entitlement. Where attendance drops below the threshold of 90%, schools have a responsibility to let families know this information and work with the families to support an increase in their attendance. This is the same for punctuality.

We would like to draw your attention to [redacted] attendance and punctuality. The Department for Education's guidance for good attendance is 97%+. [redacted] attendance

has increased slightly as well as his punctuality. Whilst this is a positive, both are still significantly below where they are expected to be.

[redacted] attendance currently stands at 83.2 %

[redacted] has been late on 31 occasions = 4 hours 27 mins since December 2023.

As part of St [redacted] commitment to your child's education, we monitor attendance very closely using our Traffic Light zoning system. Research has clearly shown that progress and achievement is very closely linked to good attendance, and when a pupil's school attendance falls below 97%, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Good attendance means children learn and achieve more and get the maximum benefit from their education. Whilst I understand that there may be genuine reasons for your child's absences, it is important that home and school work together to provide the very best learning opportunities.

Your child's attendance is in the following Zone:-



Red – Danger Zone - Below 90%

Amber – At Risk Zone - 91% - 96%

Green – Safety Zone – 97% - 100%



You can help improve your child's attendance by :

- Making sure your child goes to school and arrives on time (between 8.30am and 8.45am)
- Avoiding taking holidays in term time
- Arranging non-urgent medical and dental appointments for after school

- Sharing information around your child's health and well-being with school as early as possible.

We are really pleased to share that St [redacted] now has access to a School Attendance Officer who is able to support our school and any of our families whose child's attendance is below satisfactory or who are struggling to get their children to school on time.We have enclosed information on 'parenting contracts' which forms part of school's attendance and punctuality monitoring process. Mrs Clarke will continue to monitor your child's attendance and get in touch with you during the next 4-6 weeks to invite you into school to discuss this further.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 4: Attendance Agreement Guidance

Attendance Agreement for Attendance
A Guide for Parents/Carers

What is an attendance agreement?

An attendance agreement is a formal written agreement between a parent or carer and the school. A parenting contract may be offered if your child has failed to attend school regularly.
An attendance agreement is meant to support you and the school to identify and address the issues surrounding your child's irregular attendance at school and encourage a positive working relationship to improve attendance. It is not intended to be a punishment.

What does it involve?

Everyone signed up to the agreement will agree to take certain actions which are realistic and which address the issues of non-attendance for a specified period of

time. You might agree to do things like getting your child up on time, signing a daily report card and reporting any difficulties to school as soon as possible. School might agree to inform you if your child does not arrive at school, deal quickly with any problems and involve other agencies that might be able to offer you additional support. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

Do I have to enter into an attendance agreement?

Entry into an attendance agreement is voluntary but it does provide you with an opportunity to get support to improve your child's attendance at school. If you do take up the offer of an attendance agreement and try to comply with it, this may assist your case if the local authority decides to take legal action against you for your child's irregular attendance. If you refuse the offer or don't comply without good reason this may also be presented as evidence.
If you decide not to enter into an agreement, you will need to try to find other ways of improving your child's attendance and it may be worth discussing how you intend to do this with the school.

How is an attendance agreement arranged?

You will be invited to a meeting in school with a school representative. Depending on their age and understanding, your child may attend part or all of the meeting. At the meeting you will be asked your views on your child's attendance and whether there are any underlying issues. Try to think about the reasons behind your child's absences, any particular difficulties you are experiencing at the moment and what would help you to improve your child's attendance. Also think about what you can do to improve attendance.

School will explain what support they can offer and whether any other agency might also be able to help you and your child. You will be able to discuss what is expected of both you and the school and then agree on the actions that will support improved attendance. If you choose to accept the offer, the final agreement will be signed by you and the school representative.

Appendix 5: Attendance Agreement

Attendance Contract

Personal details

Pupil's Name:
Parents' Names:
School's Name:
Name:
Position:
Contact details:

Background to Attendance Contract

Following a meeting on between , we have all agreed that we want to work together to help to attend school more regularly. 's attendance is currently %.

What has been agreed

The School's promise

- Contact parent if pupil is absent from school without an explanation.

- Have a named person for parents to contact in school regarding attendance.
- Provide pupil with a named key worker in school.
- School will provide support to the pupil at school level if needed.
- Respond to any barriers reported that could affect attendance.
- To take measures to ensure the pupil attends school or alternative provision punctually and regularly.
- Make referrals to other partner agencies, eg the Access and Inclusion Team or 0-19 Services.
- To ensure that all SEND needs have been met or explored.
- Have a named point of contact in school for the pupil.

Parent's promise

- To supply details of their full names, address and telephone number and notify school immediately of any changes.
- To contact school on each day of absence regarding the reason for absence and provide medical evidence where possible
- To inform school of any problem affecting attendance.
- Parent to attend meetings with the school and/or other partner agencies.
- Accessing or partaking in the support or programmes offered to work with other agencies to resolve any issues affecting attendance.
- To support their child to attend school on time, each day
- Engage and contribute with any written school-home correspondence (e.g. report card)
- Set rules at home to make sure their child goes to bed and gets up at a reasonable time.
- Attend parenting classes or support groups if needed.
- Support with routines in the home to ensure school readiness

Review

We will meet again if required to discuss how things are going and whether this agreement needs to be changed in any way.
Anyone can ask for a meeting at any time to discuss the agreement further or to discuss any difficulties or problems.

Important dates We
will next meet on:

This agreement will end on the last day of the current academic year.

Agreement:

We will do what we have agreed in this attendance contract and will work together to help attend school regularly.

Signed: _____ (Parent) Date:
_____ (Student) if appropriate

Date:

_____ (School)

Date:

Complaints procedure

Any complaints will be dealt with using the school's complaints procedure.