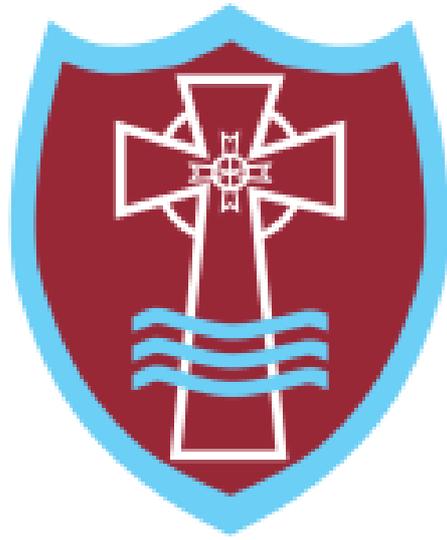


St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy



Attendance Policy

Reviewed: September 2024



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Contents

Title	Page
Mission Statement & vision	2
Aims	3
Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
Legal sanctions	5
School procedures	6
Attendance monitoring	7
Roles and responsibilities	7
Monitoring arrangements	7
Links with other policies	8
Legislation and Guidance	8
Appendix 1: attendance codes	9,10,11

Mission Statement

“Together we all enjoy learning, achieving, sharing and praying. Let Jesus’ love shine through in everything we do”

Our Mission Statement expresses this clearly:

St Aidan’s is a Catholic school which seeks to build a closer partnership with parents, the parishes and the wider community. We work hard to provide an environment which is secure, stimulating and happy and where everyone is appreciated and enabled to give of their best. We encourage all to have respect for each individual, to be honest, tolerant, just and forgiving and to develop a closer relationship with each other and through this, a closer relationship with God.

Our school vision

Here at St Aidan’s we are passionate about our children being happy, safe and healthy. We aim for children to learn in an inclusive, engaging environment; enabling them to be lifelong learners who know more, remember more and can do more in the wider world.

Aims

At St Aidan's we believe that for our pupils to achieve a good standard of academic and social success they need to attend school on a regular basis. We also understand that we need to work closely with families and outside support agencies in order for our policy to be successful.

It is our aim that all children at St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy achieve **at least 97% attendance**.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensuring all pupils are safeguarded with arrival and dismissal to school
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Communicate and support parents & Carers
- Working with the Mental Health lead/Sendco to support pupils who may struggle to attend school for many individual reasons and require intervention.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents should call the school on 020 8590 5223 and follow the instructions for reporting an absence. They should continue to call and report a child absence every morning for the duration of their illness.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. In those cases, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. We will ask for supporting evidence for sickness absence of more than 5 days.

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

Medical or dental appointments

General medical and dental appointments should be out of school hours where possible. On the rare occasion this is not possible then the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Missing registration (Am or Pm session) for a medical or dental appointment will only be counted as an authorised absence if medical evidence is supplied. This can be in the form of an appointment card, letter or message from the surgery.

Parents/Carers should make the school office aware of appointments in advance and not just turn up at the office.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

Lateness and punctuality

The school gate closes at 8:55am, a pupil who arrives late at this time will be marked as late as they arrive to their class late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Punctuality will be closely monitored by the attendance officer and the SLT. For children who are continually late for school, a warning letter will be sent to families. If punctuality does not improve, a meeting will be scheduled by the attendance officer and Education welfare officer to explore reasons for persistent lateness. This may also be followed up by a home visit should the situation not improve.

Lateness to class can cause emotional stress for children and they struggle to settle which then impacts their mental health and academic ability.

Early morning tasks are provided for the children each day and those who start in class at 8:45am each day are then experiencing a significant amount of more learning opportunities over a period of time than a child who is regularly late.

End of day collection

Gates open at 3:20pm

All pupils are expected to be collected by a Parent/Carer at the designated collection time each day. Parents are to complete the collection list for their children and record any suitable adults that they give permission for to collect their child. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school office of any changes and update the collection list when required. A teacher will only dismiss a child to the named adults on the list. If someone attempts to collect the child who does not have their name on the collection list then they will be unable to take the child until permission is sought from the parents. The teacher will inform the office to contact the parents for verbal permission on that occasion. This is part of our safeguarding protocol to ensure the safety of every child in our care.

If a parent is late collecting their child at the end of the day it is their responsibility to telephone the office and inform them. Parents are requested to make other collection arrangements if possible. The pupils will remain with the class teacher for 10 minutes after the dismissal time or until all of the class have been dismissed and then any pupils not collected will be passed onto the Senior Leadership team.

The office will telephone the parents to enquire about the reason for the late collection and discuss other options. It is the parent's responsibility to provide all contact numbers along with an emergency contact. If the school are unable to contact any of the contact numbers on the record then following 30 minutes after the dismissal the school will follow the safeguarding protocol and contact social services to report the situation.

If a child attends an after-school club/activity then it is the parent's responsibility to communicate with the school office and arrange to collect their child at the designated finish time. If continual lateness of collection occurs then a meeting will be arranged with Parents/Carers to discuss the issue.

Persistent late collection

It is recognised that on a rare occasion a late collection can occur due to circumstances out of our control however persistent late collection is a concern and a form of neglect. Parents will initially be reminded if late collection occurs and the occasions will be put in writing to the parents. Following three persistent late collections a meeting will be held with the Senior team to discuss support and a possible referral will be made to social services for an assessment or Early Help if required.

School is not a child care service and the staff are not available to supervise children.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

For any unexplained absence, a phone call will be made to the family on the first morning of the absence. If there is no response from the family, a message will be left stating that the parents should contact the school.

Reporting to parents

A pupil's attendance will be reported to parents formally throughout the year at parents' appointments. Attendance is also reported in July as part of the end of year report. The attendance of all pupils is closely monitored throughout the school year and warning letters are issued to families of pupil's whose attendance falls between 91-93% to explain that they are close to falling into the category of 'Persistent Absence'. Letters are also issued at Parent Consultation Meetings to families where a pupil's absence falls below 95% to remind them of the importance of good attendance.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Even in exceptional circumstances, we may only authorise up to 2 days absence. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as bereavements or sudden serious illness involving close family members.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Examples of valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments for the child (not family members)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. We may authorise 1 day for each religious occasion up to a maximum of 2 days each year. This leave of absence must be requested in advance.
- 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.

We do not authorise leave of absence for family holidays during term time or visits to relatives.

Request for term-time absence

Parents must request a leave of absence form from the attendance officer in the school office. This can be a paper form or sent via email on request. All evidence for the reason of the leave must be supplied with the form otherwise it will be automatically classed as unauthorised.

Legal sanctions – penalty notices by the Local Authority

The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

When the national threshold has been met a **penalty notice** can be issued. The national threshold has been met when a pupil has been **recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks**, with one of, or a combination of the following codes:

- (a) code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday),
- (b) code N (the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established),
- (c) code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies),
- (d) code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)

The national framework for **penalty notices** is based on the principles that penalty notices should only be used in cases where: • support is not appropriate (e.g. a term time holiday) or where support has been provided and not engaged with or not worked, and • they are the most appropriate tool to change parental behaviour and improve attendance for that family.

If issued with a **penalty notice**, parents must pay £80 per child, per parent within 21 days or a sum of £160 per child, per parent will be charged. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 will decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

School procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session is taken after the lunch break at 1pm.

Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. Parents will be provided with a notice to improve and offered support to improve their child's attendance. 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. The EWO will work with the families to improve the attendance and consider whether fines or court proceedings are required.

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.

Data concerning individual pupil's attendance is used to track specific pupils who may be a cause for concern and to look for any patterns or trends in absences e.g. within families.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing body:

The governing body 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.

Parental responsibility:

Parents & Carers are responsible for ensuring their child/ren attend school daily and are punctual to support their educational needs. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is collected on time each day or make suitable arrangements. Being collected late affects a child's emotional and mental health. It is the parent's responsibility to communicate with the school and keep all contact details up to date. An emergency contact must be provided at all times.

The Attendance officer:

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Communicates with parents daily to monitor attendance
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher/Education Welfare officer
- Works with SLT/Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers:

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information electronically to the school office.

Office staff:

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents and listen to messages left about absence and record it on the school system.

Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)
- Behaviour policy
- Mental Health & Well-being policy

<https://www.staidansacademy.org/school-information/policies/>

- DFE: Working together to improve school attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

- Guide for parents on school attendance

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2024/07/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance-19th-Aug-version.pdf>

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 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:

- 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 threshold.

This policy has been agreed by:



Signed:..... Headteacher



Signed:..... Chair of Governors

To be reviewed in September 2025

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
C2	Temporary reduced timetable	As agreed by the LA for medical or SEND needs on a short-term basis
J1	Interview	School interview
K	Alternative provision (LA arranged)	LA agreed provision to support SEND/behavioural needs
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport that is normally provided	LA transport issue
Y2	Wide spread disruption to travel	Safety issue
Y3	Part of school closed	
Y4	Whole school closed	
Y5		Eg: Covid
Y6	Public health guidance	
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been 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	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	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	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	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	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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