

Pray, Learn, Achieve and Celebrate Together



Attendance Policy

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St. Gabriel's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, and their parents or carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Each year, the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Wigan attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Legal Duty

The law entitles children of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education, suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education, either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities, and further development.

Relevant Legislation and Legal Background:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*.

- Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that *'if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence'*.

- Section 576 Education Act 1996 stipulates that for the purposes of Education Law, parent includes:

- All biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carers.

Registration

Registration is twice daily at 8.50am and 1pm. All registers should be completed at these times on the SIMs system. In circumstances where an electronic register cannot be completed, a manual paper register should be collected from outside the main office and returned promptly.

Staff taking the register should not leave any blank spaces.

On the SIMS system & paper registers the marks required will be either / or an **N** code only.

The Attendance Officer will override N codes on a register, according to information about the reason for absence received.

Lateness and Punctuality

- Doors open at **8.40am**
- Morning registration will take place at **8.50am**

Any child who arrives after the gates are closed must enter the school by the main entrance and report to the school reception to sign in.

- If pupils are not in class when the register is taken, they will be coded as 'L'.
- If pupils arrive after registers close, they will be coded as 'U'.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

School Procedures (Appendix 2)

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all pupils. If a child is absent, the parents/carers must inform the school on the first day of absence and each following day of absence, stating the reason.

Parents/Carers should phone school or leave a message on Parent Mail or Class Do Jo on the morning of the first day of absence, and each following day of absence, unless it has been agreed by school that this is not necessary, if the absence is or likely to be long term.

In the event a child is absent from school and the parent/carer has not notified the school of the absence, the school will contact home as soon as possible. If no contact is established or the reason for absence is not accepted, the absence will be deemed unauthorised. Should contact be established later with a parent, and a reason for absence is provided, the school may amend this to authorised if they are satisfied with the reason given.

Medical Absence

Absence due to sickness must be reported to the school by phone on the first day of absence. The school must be kept informed during longer periods of absence. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received.

It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose, or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. Please read this link for further information [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-call-the-doctor/)

If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, we will offer support in accordance with the school's and Local Authority's policies relating to children with health needs. As a school, we need to plan how children can access education during periods of long-term absence, and how and when the child will return to school. School will make reasonable adjustments for pupils where necessary and appropriate.

To ensure we have the appropriate pathway of support we will follow our 'Early identification' model and implement an individual plan tailored to a child's medical needs to enable access to suitable education.

As a school, we will adhere to the Local Authority policy [Education of pupils with medical needs \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk) This policy includes a graduated response, supporting inclusive practice across all settings to ensure children's continued links to their education provider when their health needs may impact their access to education.

Medical Appointments

Whenever possible; medical appointments should be made for out of school hours or at the end of the day. General GP/Dentist appointments will not warrant a full days' absence.

E.g. If your child's appointment is mid-morning they should attend school before, limiting the amount of learning time missed.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:

- no reason for absence has been given.
- reason for absence is deemed insufficient by School.
- a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised.
- a pupil arrives at school after registration has closed at 9.30am

Parents/carers should be aware that St Gabriel's may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term, with a view to issuing an Education Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Education Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.

[Consequences of not attending school \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk)

Religious Observance

We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance.

Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and;
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify school, in writing, in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

Enforced School Closure

If St Gabriel's was forced to close for a period, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. In such circumstances, children are expected to engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

Expectations and Responsibilities

The Governors

- Take an active role in attendance improvement by supporting the school to prioritise attendance, and work with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on, at least, a termly basis.
- Holds the Headteacher and other leaders to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

- Responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supports staff in the monitoring of attendance of individual pupils.
- Where there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with, or if appropriate, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

The Safeguarding Manager

- Report attendance concerns to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- Works with the LA to tackle persistent and severe absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Advises and supports the Headteacher to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Ensure all staff keep accurate registers.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the procedures for reporting/recording absences.
- Monitor daily the attendance of all children.
- Ensure first day absence calls take place or, in their absence, a member of the office staff.
- Ensure all absences are chased up re: reasons why they are absent from school.

- Monitor attendance weekly for any patterns, declining frequency and patterns of lateness.
- Monitor children whose attendance is at risk of becoming PA and take appropriate action.
- Take structured steps to address any of the above; the monitoring of persistent and frequent absence and the use of education penalty notices.
- Reward and praise children for prompt arrival and good attendance.
- Ensure that attendance awards are presented.
- Ensure any child with 100% attendance receives the school's attendance certificate every term.
- Ensure that staff have accurate information with regard to attendance and punctuality for progress meetings.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners.
- Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best-placed lead service. Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.

The Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily using SIMS, using the correct codes, inputting reasons for absence and submitting this information to the Safeguarding Manager, at morning and afternoon registration.
- Hold discussions with parents and pupils following any pupil absence.
- Be the first point of contact with parents, highlighting emerging attendance concerns
- Reward and praise children for prompt arrival and good attendance.
- If there is a concern about a child's absence, they will contact the Safeguarding Manager immediately.
- If there is a longer-term, general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Safeguarding Manager.

School Office Staff

- Take calls/messages from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Parents

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies

- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance following the school's procedure.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and Local Authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered by school staff and the Local Authority.

Leave of Absence [\(Appendix 1\)](#)

Requesting leave during term time is discouraged. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. Absence does have a detrimental effect on children both academically and socially.

Attendance regulations make clear that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Leave taken without permission of the Headteacher will result in these absences being marked as 'unauthorised', leaving parents open to Local Authority investigation and a potential financial penalty.

There is no automatic entitlement in Law to time off in term time to go on holiday. Unauthorised leave, taken in term time, may result in the issuing of a fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution. If you believe to have an exceptional circumstance to request leave, an application must be made using the school form. These are available from the school Office.

Information Sharing with Parents and Carers

Safeguarding Manager will contact parents/carers if there is concern regarding your child's attendance. Our school target is currently for every child to achieve 96% attendance or above. Those children who fall below this may receive letters or parents contacted to discuss. If a child's attendance falls to 90% or below, we will bring the matter to the attention of the Local Authority's Attendance Team. This will result in a child's attendance being monitored very closely and appropriate strategies put in place to help improve attendance.

It is expected that school have the same ambition for attendance for children with medical conditions or SEND and work with pupils and their parents to maximise attendance. We will put in place additional support and adjustments, when required, such as an individual healthcare plan and will ensure that the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. If required, we will consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.

Attendance monitoring stages of intervention [\(Appendix 3\)](#)

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the attendance continues to fall or there is little improvement, the school will invite parents/carers to attend a meeting to endeavour to resolve the problem; this may mean that parents/carers will be asked to comply to an Early Help Plan. At this time, it will be explained that no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence. The school may also refer to the school nurse if the problem appears medical.

It is our school policy to work with and support our families to remove the barriers to attendance. However, if attendance shows little or no improvement, a more formalised approach will be taken in conjunction with the local authority.

Persistent Absence

(Defined in legislation as 10% or more absences) If a child continues to have persistent periods of absence, parents/carers will be invited to discuss school's concerns.

Severe Absence

(Defined in legislation as 50% or more absences). All severely absent children will have a multiagency support plan in place, in conjunction with the local authority, in order to improve their attendance.

Awards/Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure good attendance and punctuality for their children. For example via Friday note, parents evenings, the Home/School agreement etc.

Individual registration certificates are sent home on a termly basis on Red, Amber and Green coloured paper. This procedure is used to keep you informed and updated about your child's attendance

Red - Attendance is less than 93%

Amber - Attendance is between 92.9% - 95.9%

Green - Attendance of 96% - 100%

At the end of the term, pupils who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate.

At the end of each school year, pupils who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate and a reward.

Children Missing Education ([Appendix 4](#))

The school has adopted the Local Authority policy for Children Missing Education and follows the guidelines and procedures in this policy.

Appendices

[Appendix 1: Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form](#)

Leave of Absence During Term Time

Guidance Notes

- Please ensure this form is completed at least 1 month prior to requesting leave. Completing this form **does not** mean your request has been approved.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 states that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** (*see below*).
- If your leave of absence is either approved and you fail to ensure that your child returns to school by the agreed date or your child takes leave when your leave of absence request is not approved, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' on the attendance register.
- For such 'unauthorised' absence, you may be liable to be issued with a penalty notice (fine). The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then you may be prosecuted. The school also reserves the right to remove your child from the roll of the school. Where this happens, please be aware that it may not always be possible to re-admit your child to the school.

Exceptional Circumstances: In considering whether any 'exceptional circumstances' apply, the Principal / Headteacher will consider if the reasons are **rare, significant, unavoidable**, and **short**. The Principal / Headteacher will also take into consideration the factors listed below:

- can the event for which leave of absence is requested be reasonably taken during school holidays?
- levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months
- any leave of absence taken previously
- whether the leave is during the exam period, controlled exam periods or will result in not meeting assessment deadlines
- age and year group of the pupil

CHILD'S DETAILS

Surname		First Name	
Date of Birth		Year Group	
Address			

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S DETAILS

Surname		First Name	
Relationship to child			
Address (if different to above)			
Telephone no.		Mobile no.	
Email			

DETAILS OF REQUEST FOR LEAVE			
Date of Departure		Date of Return	
No. of School Days Absence		Destination	
Local emergency contact name		Emergency contact number	
Address resident atwhilst on leave			
<p>Please provide details and reasons for requesting leave of absence and in particular any 'exceptional circumstances'. If necessary, please provide any documentary evidence in support of your request.</p>			
<p>I certify that the information provided on this form is correct. I understand that the school reserves the right to issue a penalty notice or remove my child from the school register for unauthorised leave.</p>			
Signature		Date	

– FOR COMPLETION BY THE SCHOOL –

Authorised	YES / NO		
Exceptional Circumstances			
Signature		Date	
Name		Position	

Appendix 2: Attendance codes

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
B	Off-site educational activity (not dual registered)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registered
E	Excluded
G	Unauthorised holiday
H	Authorised holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late arrival
M	Medical/Dental appointment
N	No reason of absence yet provided
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Sporting Activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registration has closed)
V	Educational trip or visit
X	Not compulsory
W	Work Experience
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All pupils should attend

[Appendix 3: Attendance and absence data](#)

The tables below equate percentage attendance to time missed from school.

Table 1: Attendance over one whole school year for each pupil

Attendance	Missed Days
100%	0
98%	Less than 4 days / 8 sessions
97%	Less than 5 days / 10 sessions (school target)
95%	Less than 10 days / 20 sessions
90%	20 days / 40 sessions
85%	27 ½ days / 55 sessions
80%	37 ½ days / 75 sessions

Table 2: Attendance over 5 years for each pupil

Attendance	Missed Weeks
85-90%	19 weeks – ½ year absence from school
80%	38 weeks = 1 full year absence from school

What does 'percentage attendance' mean?

Parents/carers should be advised that the Government have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absent' pupils (PA). The table below shows the learning time lost against percentage attendance figures.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days Missed	Equivalent Sessions Missed	Equivalent Weeks missed	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 days	18 sessions	1.4 weeks	45 lessons
90%	19 days	38 sessions	3.4 weeks	95 lessons
85%	29 days	58 sessions	5.4 weeks	145 lessons
80%	36 days	72 sessions	7.1 weeks	180 lessons
75%	48 days	96 sessions	9.3 weeks	240 lessons

As of May 2022, the Department for Education have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 50% and below as 'Severely Absent' pupils. The Department for Education advise for all pupils who fall within this category to have a robust multi-agency plan and approach in place to support.



CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION REFERRAL & CHECKLIST

June 2022 v5

As outlined in the statutory guidance for Local Authorities 'Children Missing from Education' are children of compulsory school age who are not a registered pupil at a school or are not receiving suitable education other if they are not registered at a school.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days without authorisation, the school and the local authority have a responsibility to jointly make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. The appropriate completion of this checklist ensures that the Local Authority and school have fulfilled this responsibility.

It is school's responsibility to follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner and every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. If you require advice and guidance, please contact the Children Missing Education inbox CME@wigan.gov.uk. Where there are concerns in relation to safeguarding or child protection issues contact the Children First Partnership Hub on 01942 828300.

It is important that one checklist is completed for each child within the family, please do not include all children on one.

During the first 10 days of absence (reason unknown), school must complete this referral form and checklist. Once completed, if the child's whereabouts remains unknown, please make a referral to the Children Missing Education CME@wigan.gov.uk within 5 days or earlier if all checks have been completed.

At any point, if you feel a child is at risk of significant harm, FGM, human trafficking or sexual exploitation, refer immediately to social care - please contact 01942 828300

Please note that if the child is residing or located in the Wigan Borough, they are not a CME and should not be removed from school roll. Policies in relation to school attendance should be followed in these cases.

CHILD'S INFORMATION:

Child's Name:		DOB:
Child's Address:		
Previous Address: (if known)		
School:		
Parent/carer's names:		
Parent/carer's address:		
Contact names & numbers: (include emergency)		
Any known siblings & school:		

<u>Name of member of staff completing form</u>			
<u>School checklist</u>	<u>Dates/Times</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>	<u>Name</u>
<p>School to attempt to contact parent on first day of absence.</p> <p>This includes Truancy Call, First Day calling, Text, Email, all emergency contacts. Please detail all contact methods - whether a message was left, if the phone is working, is there an international dialling tone.</p>			
<p>School to check possible whereabouts with staff and pupils?</p> <p>This should include checking with family friends, all staff members, the child's friends, social media</p>			

Contact all emergency contact numbers you hold in school.			
Visit to address(es) by school. Leave card if no answer Does the property look empty? Is someone at home but not answering the door? NB if school policy does not permit home visit a police welfare check to be requested			
Contact made with involved agencies within 5 working days (Social Care, EMAS team, School Nurse etc)			
Contact made with agencies to understand when they last had contact/saw the child (no consent needed) - Social care - school nurse (when did health have any contact with the child)			
School to contact the new school or Local Authority the child is believed to have moved to? What were the outcomes? https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council			
NB – Has the child been seen? State when & by whom If not seen, what further action has been taken? (Refer to CME Policy Doc for advice)			

Reason for CME checks:	
Any other agencies involved:	
Known vulnerability/risk factors Do you feel this child is at risk of harm or neglect Y/N please provide detail:	

Is this child Gypsy Roma Traveller? Y/N
Is this child parents service personnel? Y/N
Has this child had any Missing from home episodes? Y/N
Is this child known to the Youth Justice System? Y/N
Does this child have any SEN/learning needs? Y/N
Are there any other vulnerabilities you are aware of? Please provide detail;
Date:

All boxes must be completed, of not relevant please enter N/A

ALL BOXES MUST BE COMPLETED, IF NOT RELEVANT PLEASE ENTER N/A

Please submit this referral to CME@wigan.gov.uk