

St Gabriel's C of E  
Primary School



# Attendance policy

**2025 - 2026**

## *Improving attendance is everyone's business*

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. As set out in section 1 of the 'working together to improve school attendance.' Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Refer to other agencies for support if needed.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the Middleton area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe. Each of these aims are set out in more detail in the working together to improve school attendance.

## **2. 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:

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

School attendance is everybody's business – at St Gabriel's some staff may have additional duties relating to this.

#### **3.1 The governing body**

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
- Our link governor for attendance is Nadine Waldron

#### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher 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 penalty notices referrals, where necessary
- The designated Headteacher is Kathryn Chubb
- Referring to other agencies and putting attendance plans in place if there are concerns about emotional based non-attendance at school

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader (SL) responsible for attendance is**

**Debra Foster**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Supporting the Headteacher with their responsibility
- 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
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to monitor all our pupils
- Advising the Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue penalty notices warning letters
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Foster

### 3.4 School Admin staff

The school administrative staff are responsible for: Supporting the Headteacher and the designated senior leader (SL) with their responsibilities

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls/queries from parents in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance when necessary
- 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 Education Welfare Officers to monitor all our pupils
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue penalty notices warning letters

The school administrative staff are Janna Addison and Lucy Wright

### 3.5 Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They need to submit these in the morning and the afternoon at the end of register (when the register closes).

### 3.6 All staff

Staff are expected to read the attendance policy and read the DfE document 'working together to improve school attendance' – paying particular note of 'schools responsibilities'.

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Making sure their child attends every day on time
- Calling the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the first day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return. If the school do not hear from a parent/carer then they will attempt to make contact and may even do a home visit.
- Providing the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensuring that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and where possible provide evidence of this
- Using the Inventory system to sign children in/out
- Keeping early collection as an emergency
- Speaking to school if you have concerns about your child's attendance

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 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

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 5 years after the date on which the entry was made. School gates open at 8:30am. The morning register opens at 8:50am and closes at 9:00am. The afternoon register opens at 1.00pm for EYFS and KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2.

### **4.2 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 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff.

Parent/carer's are able to notify the school office [office@stgabrielsce.rochdale.sch.uk](mailto:office@stgabrielsce.rochdale.sch.uk) or by telephone 0161 6539587

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. The school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide appropriate medical evidence. If you are asked to provide evidence this does not need to be a letter from your doctor or consultant, and doctors will not usually provide such letters. It can, instead, be appointment cards, prescriptions, or notes of previous consultations (including from the NHS App). We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### 4.3 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 out 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.

### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives after 9:00am and before 9:30am will be recorded as **L**. A pupil who arrives after 9:30am will be recorded as **U** for that session.

Our school inventory system logs all pupils arriving late, before and after the registers have closed, and will apply the appropriate code to the school registers. We are then able to report on this data and identify any patterns. If the number of lates become a concern then the parent/carer would receive a letter and, in some cases, be invited into school to discuss this further.

### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, then a message will be sent home or a call to request they contact the school. We will then ring through the extended contact list if we do not hear back. If we are unable to make any contact, this may trigger a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not, liaising with the Headteacher/designated senior leader where necessary.
- 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.

### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 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.

There is no clear definition of 'exceptional circumstances' but if something happens that is out of the ordinary, unavoidable or unexpected, then this will be considered.

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, before the absence, with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or the school website.

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- 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
- Where the Headteacher has deemed an absence to be 'exceptional circumstances.'

Actions for unauthorised absence.

The school can refer to the local authority for a penalty notice in the following circumstances:

- An unauthorised holiday (lasting 5 school days or more)
- Unauthorised absence (lasting 5 school days or more) in a 10-week period.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Attendance certificates in celebration assembly
- Half-termly reward for the class with the highest attendance
- Attendance figures reported to parents on the newsletter
- Weekly attendance winners displayed on the school website.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence fortnightly, 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 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.

### **7.2 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.

### **7.3 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.

### **7.4 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 who 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 Individual Attendance Support Plans for severely absent pupils are used as a way to engage and support families to ultimately improve their child/rens attendance. Penalty notices can be issued for extended term time leave and/or low school attendance; these are considered on a case by case basis. If, following the steps above, school has seen no improvements then the parent/carer will be invited to an attendance panel, where an Educational Welfare Officer may be present. A referral to the Education Welfare Service would be considered once certain criteria has been met, where further legal proceedings could be arranged.

### 7.5 Working with the Local Authority

We monitor the children's attendance on a regular basis. We analyse individual pupils, classes and year groups. We also look at different groups of children including – vulnerable, SEND, boys/girls, FSM etc. Persistent absentees, severely absent pupils, alternative provision, part-time timetables, lates and punctuality. We have a duty to discuss all attendance with the Education Welfare Officer. Targeted Support/Confidential discussion meetings take place on a termly basis with the Education Welfare Service.

The school work closely with the Education Welfare Service to monitor all pupils' attendance including;

- Vulnerable children
- Children who have a Social Worker
- EHCP or SEND
- Persistent absence (below 90%)
- Severely absent from school (below 50%)
- On an alternative provision
- On a part-time timetable
- Poor punctuality.
- Good attendance.

At St Gabriel's our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is Nikita Dawson

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher/Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Home school agreement



