

# St Gabriel's C.E. Primary School

## Attendance Policy



February 2023

## Our Christian Vision

Our St Gabriel's family nurtures every child to develop a sense of self belief, giving them courage to take risks in a bid to be the best that they can be. They develop friendship and respect for each other. They are surrounded by God's love, guiding them to offer forgiveness for those who may do wrong against them. They do this knowing that Jesus is by their side, guiding them to flourish, as they follow their chosen path.

**Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

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### 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:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 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

### 3.1 The governing board

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 governors for attendance are Mr Stephen Leech and Mrs Tracey Cragg . They work alongside Mrs Foster to ensure that school is doing all it can to improve and maintain good rates of attendance in all year groups.

### 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 fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 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 Mrs D Foster. She can be contacted via 0161 653 9587 or [office@stgabrielsce.rochdale.sch.uk](mailto:office@stgabrielsce.rochdale.sch.uk)

### 3.4 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs D Foster. She is supported by our Attendance Link, Miss Lucy Wright. They can be contacted via 0161 653 9587 or [office@stgabrielsce.rochdale.sch.uk](mailto:office@stgabrielsce.rochdale.sch.uk).

### **3.5 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 ten minutes after the start of each session.

### **3.6 School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence (before 9:15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **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

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 in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:05am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm.

## **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 9:15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7). We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. 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 and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **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.

Parents should show a copy of the appointment card to the school office staff, so that this can be verified.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4.4 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

This will be tracked and followed up using our graduated response (see Section 7.4)

## **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, St Gabriel's CE Primary 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, the school may make a home visit, contact Children's Social Care or contact the police.
- › 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, St Gabriel's CE Primary School will consider involving an education welfare officer

## 4.6 Reporting to parents / carers

St Gabriel's CE Primary School will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via annual printed attendance report supplied alongside the child's annual report. Additionally, by termly written reports if the child's absence is showing concern.

## 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something that would be extremely difficult to be done at any other time.

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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. 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, St Gabriel's CE Primary 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

### 5.2 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 with 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 issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- 20 unauthorised absences occurring within a 12 week rolling period.
- 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.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

### 6.1 Promoting attendance

St Gabriel's CE Primary School will:

- Promote attendance by awarding a certificate each week in a celebration assembly for the class with the best attendance per week.
- Use a raffle ticket system where every child who has attended on time, every day over a week receives a raffle ticket into a prize draw. These are drawn out at the end of each term in our celebration assembly. One child per class is chosen from their class raffle ticket box to receive a prize of their own choosing from a wide selection of prizes.
- Celebrate improved attendance by sending a written message of thanks to those families who have made a significant effort to improve their attendance.
- Children targeted to improve attendance may receive a small attendance prize each Friday for full attendance with no lates that week.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

St Gabriel's CE Primary School will:

- Check attendance registers each day and make telephone calls to the families of those children who are absent each day. These calls and their outcome are logged on our school attendance monitoring system. Children who arrive late in school each day are logged and those who are persistently late are targeted for support via our graduated response approach
- 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 level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. St Gabriel's CE Primary School will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

St Gabriel's CE Primary 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

St Gabriel's CE Primary 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.

St Gabriel's CE Primary 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

St Gabriel's has a graduated response to addressing attendance issues

### **Graduated Response**

Letter 1-This informs the parent that their child's attendance is currently a cause for concern, states their current percentage and that any further absence will push them below school's expected target (96%), and Government's expected target (95%). It then includes an offer of support or opportunity to discuss this further by contacting school to arrange a meeting with the attendance officer.

Letter 1b- This is where the child's attendance is significantly below the expected targets. It informs parents that due to the level of absence we now require medical evidence for each instance, if this is deemed sufficient then School will be able to authorise that absence. If not provided, or not sufficient, the absence will remain unauthorized. The offer of support is again included, along with notification that the Attendance Officer will continue to monitor the child's absence and they may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. A list of children requiring medical evidence will be kept up to date, and available in the office. This will also be discussed at staff briefing

Letter 2- Informs parent that following previous letters their child's attendance is now at XX%, which is below the targets. As a result we are referring them into our attendance management process to identify any additional support they may need to overcome barriers to their child attending school regularly. They are asked to contact the school office to arrange a meeting with Attendance Officer.

### **Facilitate Support**

Letter 3a-Following letter 2 parent has failed to make contact with school in the agreed timeframe. As a result they must now provide medical evidence for each absence, and school will determine whether this will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. The Attendance Officer will continue to monitor your child's absence and may be referred to Education Welfare Service.

Letter 3b-Following the meeting between Parent & School we have agreed the following actions to support the parent in improving the child's attendance (Agreements Listed). It thanks them for attending, states we will continue to monitor and if no significant improvement they will be referred to EWS.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mrs D Foster (Attendance Champion / Assistant Headteacher.) At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



## 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Approved by: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]