



St Gabriel
the Archangel
Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

POLICY

Approval and review

Committee to approve policy	19.03.2026
Date of Board / Academy Committee Approval	19.03.2026
Chair of Board / Academy Representative	Mr R Fello
Signature	
Head teacher	Mr Rayner
Signature	
Policy review period	24 Months
Date of policy review	March 2028

Mission Statement

**United in faith, love and learning,
we place Christ at the centre of all that we do,
to inspire all members of our community
to reach their God-given potential**

A Policy for Attendance

St Thomas More Catholic Academy is committed to supporting and promoting good attendance of all pupils. We aim to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes and maintains high attendance.
- Implement a clear attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete attendance registers and implement effective day to day processes to follow-up absence.
- Reduce to a minimum, the number of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Identify and reduce to a minimum the number of pupils who are persistently or severely absent
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with attendance, and implement appropriate strategies
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the CMAT, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe and/or in order to pro-actively identify patterns or trends which may lead to reductions in absence.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy works closely with the CMAT Education Welfare Manager (EWM), in partnership with parents/carers in promoting and encouraging 100 percent attendance and punctuality for all pupils. Attendance retains a high profile and information is shared with all staff sharing responsibility for learners. Professional development is scheduled so that staff maintain knowledge and clarity about the systems and accountabilities for all relating to registration, attendance and punctuality.

Education Welfare Manager

CMAT Education Welfare Manager (EWM) is responsible for overseeing attendance and punctuality across selected academies within the trust. A key aspect of the role is providing guidance and support to school staff, pupils, and parents/carers. The EWM also prepares summary reports for the Senior Executive Principal and the Board of Directors.

Policy and Practice

This policy applies to all pupils from Key Stage 3-5.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy aims to maintain good attendance and punctuality by implementing a policy within which staff, children, parents/carers and the Education Welfare Manager (EWM) can work in partnership. The school maintains attendance records and initiates quick and early intervention when a potential barrier to attendance and/or pattern or trend in absence is identified. It is crucial that children develop the habit of regular and punctual attendance in preparation for future life. Staff encourage and acknowledge good attendance and punctuality, and liaise with colleagues proactively, parents/carers and other agencies, when appropriate. Good attendance and punctuality are rewarded and school leaders use a range of rewards to acknowledge positive attendance and punctuality, eg. letters to parents/carers, class and/or individual rewards.

Registration

There are four broad classifications in the attendance register:

Present: - Pupil on the school premises at the time of registration.

Approved educational activity: - Pupil is engaged in an approved supervised activity off site.

Authorised absence: - Pupil has the authority of the school to be absent, either given in advance or afterwards.

Unauthorised absence: - No explanation received or unacceptable reason given, this includes no medical evidence being provided.

2.2 Symbols Used:

Present Codes:

- / or \ (**Present am or pm**): Student is present in school during registration.
- **L (Late)**: Student arrived late before the register closed.
- **B (Educated off Site)**: Student is at an approved, supervised off-site educational activity.
- **K (Education provision provided by LA)**: Student is receiving education arranged by the local authority.
- **P (Sporting Activity (Approved))**: Student is participating in a school-approved, supervised sporting activity.
- **V (Educational trip)**: Student is on a school-organised residential trip or supervised educational trip.
- **W (Work Experience)**: Student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.

Authorised Absent Codes:

- **C (Other Authorised Absence)**: Leave for exceptional circumstances.
- **C1 (Other Authorised Absence)**: Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad.
- **C2 (Other Authorised Absence)**: Pupils on part-time timetables.
- **J1 (Interview)**: Leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
- **E (Excluded)**: Student is excluded but still on the admission register (up to the sixth consecutive day of a fixed period or permanent exclusion).
- **M (Medical/Dental Appointments)**: Absence due to medical or dental appointments that could not be scheduled outside school hours.
- **R (Religious Observance)**: Absence for religious observance on a designated day.
- **S (Study Leave)**: Study leave granted sparingly to Year 11 pupils for public exams, with students still able to attend school for revision.
- **T (Traveller Absence)**: Used when Travellers are travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
- **I (Illness)**: Used for any form of illness, including Covid-19 illness if not distinguished.

Unauthorised Absent Codes:

- **G (Family Holiday (Not Agreed))**: Holiday not authorised by the school or exceeding the period determined by the headteacher.
- **N (No Reason)**: Reason for absence not provided; if no reason is provided after 3 days, it is changed to O.
- **O (Unauthorised Absence)**: School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence.
- **U (Late (After Register Closes))**: Student arrived after the register closed.

Codes that are not counted and don't affect attendance figures:

- **D (Dual Registration):** Student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson (e.g., at a pupil referral unit).
- **X (Non-statutory school age absence):** Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend (for sixth form students above compulsory school age when not expected to attend)
- **Y1 (Unable to attend):** Absence due to unavailable transport.
- **Y2 (Unable to attend):** Absence due to widespread disruption to travel.
- **Y3 (Unable to attend):** Absence due to part of the school being closed.
- **Y4 (Unable to attend):** Absence due to unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
- **Y5 (Unable to attend):** Absence due to pupils in the criminal justice system.
- **Y6 (Unable to attend):** Absence due to public health guidance or law.
- **Y7 (Unable to attend):** Any other unavoidable cause.
- **Z (Pupil Not On Roll):** Used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining; schools must take attendance from the student's first scheduled day.
- **# (School Closed To Pupils):** Used for whole or partial school closures known or planned in advance, such as if the school is used as a polling station.

Lateness is recorded as:

- **L:** If a pupil arrives before the register closes (9.20am)
- or**
- **U:** If a pupil arrives after the register closes at 9.20am (Parents/carers must be aware that a U code constitutes unauthorised absence and will affect your child's attendance record)

First Day Contact

DfE guidelines on school attendance stress that the single most effective initiative designed to improve rates of attendance is the implementation of first day response to pupil absence. Parents/carers are expected to sign the Home School Agreement and support the school's policy on attendance, by:

- contacting the school on the first day of absence
- establishing the reason for absence at an early stage,
- preventing unauthorised absence,
- informing the school of any potential difficulties with attendance, and access support from the attendance team.

The school operates a first day contact policy as follows.

Parents/carers are expected to contact school no later than 9.30a.m. or leave a message via voicemail. In the event of no contact being made, parents/carers are telephoned by a member of the attendance team on a priority basis, this is collated through collaboration with the safeguarding team. Where there is no answer from parents an announcement and/or email is sent informing the parent of absence and requesting contact is made.

The outcome of the conversation is recorded on Class Charts / Arbor. If there is no reply, or the school is unable to make contact, a home visit may take place on a priority basis. Should there be no reasonable explanation for absence, this will be categorised as 'unauthorised.' Where patterns of absence occur, absence may be classed as 'unauthorised' unless medical evidence is provided which supports the correct coding for absence and ensuring the correct support is identified.

Monitoring Pupil Attendance

Registers are reviewed daily to ensure that attendance problems are addressed promptly, including:

- persistent or unexplained absences
- continual broken weeks
- patterns of non-attendance on specific days
- % attendance below the school average (see prospectus)

- repeated medical absences and patterns of illness
- persistent lateness

It is school policy to communicate promptly with families and work with children and families to provide appropriate support to improve a child's attendance.

Persistent absences, or sudden changes to attendance, will trigger a response from the school attendance team. Parents/carers will be contacted to meet with relevant staff, and could include the Education Welfare Manager, to discuss attendance.

Class teachers also have a responsibility to support the school's policy, by monitoring attendance and forward any concerns, directly to the attendance team.

If the school remain concerned regarding a pupil's welfare or attendance, a home visit and/or further attendance actions may be completed by the school. Should absences remain unexplained or give cause for welfare concern, school will communicate with relevant partner agencies to safeguard the wellbeing of pupils. Should absences persist, this may result in a referral to the local authority for possible statutory intervention.

If attendance remains low and no valid reason is given, parents/carers are required to attend an attendance clinic with the Education Welfare Manager and members of the attendance team.

Where attendance remains a concern, a child may be referred to the Barnardo's 'Watchtower project' which aims to work with individual children/families to ensure improved attendance in the future through mentoring and support.

Sixth Form attendance (Travelling students)

Students who are expected on the Trinity Minibus but fail to arrive will be marked as absent and contact will be made inline with whole school policy. Where a sixth form student arrives after the Trinity Minibus has left alternate transport arrangements maybe made (in agreement with Trinity partners) or they will remain in the home school to work independently and marked as present.

Mini-bus drivers are to submit the register of who has travelled to visitor reception before leaving if the school site where a member of the Sixth Form team has been unavailable to come down to retrieve this in person.

Persistent Absence

From September 2015, the Government defines any child with attendance below 90% as a 'persistent absentee'. The school attendance team has developed rigorous procedures for monitoring lateness and absence.

Procedures are as follows:

- If a pupil is identified as having frequent absence recorded, parents/carers will be informed via email how many days of absence has been recorded and if the student/family need support in improving the child's attendance. (Letter 1 – whole school)
- If attendance continues to fall parents will be invited in for an attendance clinic with the EWM where families will be offered support to remove any barriers to attendance. (Letter 2 – whole school)
- Students with attendance below 90% will get a persistent absence letter of concern where further support will be offered (Letter 3 – whole school)
- Students/families (where appropriate) may then be invited to an attendance review meeting where we will set individual targets for your child and we will review these after 6 weeks (Letter 4a and Letter 4b – 11-16).
- If after these measures your child's attendance fails to improve we will work with the Local Authority and issue a 'Notice to Improve Attendance Letter' (Letter 5 – 11-16). If attendance does not improve after receiving this letter a Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority.

Support to families will be offered through the school and agencies with an overall aim of securing regular attendance. When necessary, the Education Welfare Manager will pursue a referral to the local authority for statutory action.

Illness and Medical Condition

The school discourages medical/dental appointments during school time.

Where absence is causing concern, the school may inform parents/carers that medical evidence is required in order for absence to be authorised.

Holiday Requests

In line with government policy, the school will not authorise holidays to be taken during term time. Following the City Council's new Code of Conduct any unauthorised term time holiday could lead to a fine(s) from the LA. The Headteacher and governing body hold responsibility for implementing this policy and informing the LA of circumstances which could result in the imposing of a fine(s).

Please note, persistent pupil absence may be classed as a legal offence and could result in legal proceedings.

Prolonged periods of continuous absence may result in a child losing his/her place in the school.

Religious Festivals

As a Catholic school we acknowledge requests for the celebration of other Religious Festivals e.g. Eid. In accordance with national guidance, the school may approve absence for "a day exclusively set apart for religious observance" this is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to record the occasion' Only 1 day will be permitted per Religious Festival.

No further days will be approved and will be recorded as unauthorised.

Acknowledging Good Attendance

The school promotes a range of positive strategies to promote and reward good attendance.

Weekly trophies are awarded to the classes for best attendance of the week. Staff constantly praise and offer positive encouragement to children who are regularly punctual and have good attendance. Improvements to attendance and punctuality are also recognised weekly by form tutors and themed termly prizes distributed for improvements to attendance.

Weekly reward points are issued via class charts from 100% attendance, improvements in attendance and high standards of punctuality. Students with 100% attendance and no late marks are entered into a weekly prize draw.

All pupils achieving 100% attendance each term will be rewarded with 5 reward points on class charts and entered into a prize draw.

The school's overall attendance figure is shared with parents/carers and recorded onto the newsletter.

Attendance/punctuality is highlighted and/or acknowledged during parents evening, in particular when discussing gaps in individual pupil progress and attainment.

Improved attendance is similarly recognised and communicated to parents/carers.

Monitoring and Reporting on Attendance

Senior leaders monitor punctuality and attendance on a weekly basis.

Late arrival is recorded, including the date, time and reason for being late.

The Education Welfare Manager monitors lateness and attendance.

Where specific patterns of attendance/absence are identified a best fit approach is adopted for support and intervention individual to the students barrier, year group, additional need (if identified) and pastoral need.

Information for Parents/carers

Information for parents/carers is provided in a leaflet called 'Attendance Matters' which is issued annually. Copies are available in other languages, either in the main entrance, or on request. This is also shared at induction of all new pupils to the school.