ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025 – 26

Contents

1. Aims

> This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including: Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students

> Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every student 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 college

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

> This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024](#)

> [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

This policy also refers to:

> [School census guidance](#)

> [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

> [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and

> Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

> Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students, but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

> Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs

> Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

> Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

- The importance of good attendance

- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers

- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

> Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

> Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

> Holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the college

> Monitoring college-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, and/or authorizing the VP i/c Attitudes, Behaviour & Pastoral welfare to be able to do so

> Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

> Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

> Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading, championing and improving attendance across the college

> Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

> Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

> Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

> Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

> Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues

> Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms Nottage, she can be contacted via an email marked for her attention, sent to; contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The college 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 college staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the principal

> Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the principal/Ms Nottage (authorised by the principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Carr and can be contacted via 0207 237 6432 EXT: 708 and/or d.carr@stmichaelscollege.org.uk

3.5 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information electronically within form time. Any notes and/or additional information should be submitted to Mrs Carr.

3.6 College office staff

College office staff will:

> Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the college system

> Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Mrs Carr and at times, to Tutors or Leaders of Learning 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 college to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the college with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the college day

> Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the college and/or local authority

> Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's tutor, Leader of Learning or Mrs Carr who can be contacted via 0207 237 6432 EXT: 708 and/or d.carr@stmichaelscollege.org.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend college every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

Form tutors will take the attendance register at the start of the college day and during form time at the end of the day. 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in college by 8.40am on each college day.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the college 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 college office (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the college has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the college 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 college 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.

It is the Form Tutors' responsibility to collect absence notes which should be in writing.

It is the Form Tutors' responsibility to chase up notes for absence. If a form tutor experiences difficulty in obtaining notes or reasons for absence the Form Tutor should report the problem to their Leader of Learning.

If a Form Tutor has concerns about a students' attendance in their form then they should report their concerns to their Leader of Learning. Remember the Form Tutor is the first point of contact with students and they are the member of staff who will have the most accurate view of a child's pattern of attendance.

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 college in advance of the appointment.

Parents/Carer should notify their child's tutor AND Mrs Carr. The pupil's parent/carer must complete the Student absence permission form located on Edulink, under links. Medical appointment letters/cards must be provided.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of college hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of college for the minimum amount of time necessary. E.g. if a GP appointment is at 12.30, the student should be in school for the morning and where possible return for the rest of the afternoon.

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 college can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to be in the College playground by 8.40am. If a student arrives at the College gate at 8.41 or later then they will be deemed as arriving late, this will have the following implications:

1-2 late/s to college in a **week**	Whole school detention
3 lates in a **week** / **half term**	1-hour Saturday detention
4 - 9 lates in a **half term**	Next day morning detention, 8 – 8.30. If the student fails to turn up on time they will be in the APB for the day, finishing at 4.30 and parents will have to virtually meet with L/L
10 lates in a **half term**	1 day in the APB L/L to meet with parent (face-to-face)
15 lates in a **half term/ year**	2 days in the APB SLT to meet with parents May result in a referral to LA
20+ lates in a **half term/ year**	Will result in a referral to LA and may result in further sanctions such as a FTE.

If a student is late due to a valid reason, for example, a doctor's appointment you will need to provide evidence of this (this is the same for Sixth form students). We will use our discretion if there are genuine traffic problems within the College vicinity but please note, **phone calls to the College on a regular basis will not be sufficient to omit a student from the above sanctions.**

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code – "**L**"
> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code – "**U**" (this mean that they miss a session – each day is spilt into two sessions)

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

> Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence via an Edulink message then with a follow up call for pupils who are regularly absent, with the aim of ascertaining the reason for absence.

> 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, the college will consider involving an education welfare officer

> Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer

> Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance

> Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

> Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

> When there has not been a reason given for a pupil's absence despite the college's best efforts, it will be marked as unauthorised in the register. A letter is sent on a Friday to remind parents/carers that their child has an unauthorized absence and to further request that they share the reason for absence as soon as possible or their absence will remain unauthorised.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The college will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, via termly reports. For students that have attendance figures below 96% there will be additional communication, please see section 7.4.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

> Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

> Attending an interview

> Study leave

> A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

> Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The college considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. When considering whether to authorise an absence as well as the specifics of the request, the principal will take into account the level of attendance over the previous three terms.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

> Illness (including mental-ill health) 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 college will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent/carer 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 age travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the college, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- Exceptional circumstances, i.e. death of an immediate relative, e.g. parent or sibling.

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

- Attending provision arranged by the local authority

- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The principal, VP i/c Attitudes, Behaviour & Pastoral welfare, local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

All penalty notices will be issued by the local authority.

Before referring for a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

> Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
> The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
> Details of the support provided so far
> Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
> A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
> A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
> The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Celebrating good attendance in weekly staff bulletin and student notices, awarding students house points and awarding attendance certificates at celebration assemblies.

7. Supporting students who are absent or returning to college

For students that have been absent due to complex barriers to attendance, due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND, the inclusion and pastoral teams will work with the student and their family to support them to get back into school full time. This process will be overseen by the VP i/c attitudes, behaviour, & pastoral welfare and may include an initial reduced timetable, with regular meetings with assigned staff, outside agencies (where appropriate) and the family.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring and analysis

The college will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the college and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

> 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 (stages listed below)

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

> Provide regular attendance reports to all college staff, 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

Attendance stages:

Attendance and Absence categories	Attendance Stages	Follow up action
100% Perfect Attendance		Voucher prize draw
> 96% Above PA target attendance		Positive Letter home
94.9% - 95.9% Below PA target attendance	**Stage 1:** Notification to improve	Letter & L/L call home
90.1% - 94.8% Risk of Persistent absence	**Stage 2:** Attendance contract	L/L meeting with contract
< 90% - 50.1% Persistently absent	**Stage 3:** Attendance review	Call/meeting depending on atten % - should be 6 weeks later and definitely no more than 7 weeks after contract signed. **LA Stage 1**
< 50% Severely absent, constituting 'educational neglect'	**Stage 4:** Escalated attendance review with the LA Potential Penalty notice	Meeting with school and Senior Education Welfare Officer (SEWO) Education parenting contract SEWO may advise to issue a formal written Notice of Attendance Concern **LA Stage 2**
	Further review with the LA Potential Education legal planning	Meeting with school and SEWO Decision on whether to extend the period of the parenting contract with the aim of avoiding legal proceedings, or whether education legal planning should be initiated. **LA Stage 3**

Absence duration	Action
First day of Absence	Edulink message during the morning Follow up call for pupils who are regularly absent
Second day of Absence	If call hasn't taken place yet it must
Absent 6-7 days	Tutor calls home
Absent 8 days (= 96% attendance)	Initial warning letter
Absent 10 days (= 95% attendance)	Notice to improve letter & L/L call home
Absent 12-16 days (=94-92% attendance)	L/L meeting with contract

8.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of college, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of college. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The college will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the college (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or at risk of persistent or severe absent, or who are persistently or severely absent to:
  - o Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - o Explain the help that is available
  - o Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - o Review any existing actions or interventions
- Conduct home visits where deemed necessary
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, i.e. Parent Partnership meetings
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Additional Reference:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

https://services.southwark.gov.uk/childcare-and-parenting/children-s-social-care/family-early-help-feh/education-inclusion-handbook/managing-attendance-the-three-stage-approach?chapter=3&article

July 2025

Signed: Catherine d Bary

Date: 26/09/2025

Chair of the Welfare Committee

Review Date: July 2026

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention

		- Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or - Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays