

The Newman Catholic Collegiate



“Growing Together for life”

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Aims

Policy Statement

"By faith only do we know our position in the world, our circumstances, our rights and privileges, our fortunes, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our age, our mortality" John Henry Newman

In accordance with our Collegiate Mission statement, we strive to secure a shared vision for all associated with our Collegiate community and we aim to provide a caring environment which seeks to promote the development of self-respect and respect for others.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to make good progress at school and maximise their full spiritual, academic and social potential in a caring and supportive environment. Staff, governors and Directors are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that it is effectively and appropriately implemented.

The academies aim to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, students, parents/carers, other agencies and when appropriate, the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The academies maintain attendance records and initiate quick and early intervention when a problem is identified. We feel it is crucial that children develop the habit of regular and punctual attendance and learn to be responsible and reliable. Staff encourage good attendance and punctuality and liaise with parents/carers and other agencies when appropriate. In addition, good attendance and punctuality are seen as achievements in their own right and are recognised as such by the academies. WE believe that that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards collegiate life. This policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all. It is the right of every child to receive an education. To do this, we must work with families to ensure that everybody understands their role and responsibilities in ensuring a child's good 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

(a) The Governing Body

The Governing Body 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

(b) The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors and the Senior Leadership team who will, in turn, report it to the Board of Directors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

(c) 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

(d) The Attendance Officer

The Pupil attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7). This includes checking for missing marks and absent pupils by checking class registers during each session.
- 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/Collegiate education Welfare Officer responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Work with the Collegiate Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal/Asst Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

(e) Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Attendance Officer using the SIMS lesson monitoring software.
- Encouraging students to achieve excellent attendance
- Notice any attendance patterns causing concerns and discuss with the pupil or alert the relevant member of staff

(f) School admin/office staff

School admin and office staff will

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system or forward to the Attendance Officer.
- Transfer calls from parents and pupils to the Attendance Officer/SLT/Safeguarding/Collegiate EWO in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

(g) Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before a time set by the school 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

(h) Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time

(i) Collegiate Education Welfare Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Pupil attendance below 84.9%
- Working with parents/carers and students to remove barriers to school attendance
- Support the academy processes to raise attendance levels across the collegiate
- Refer to the Education Welfare Service where appropriate

4. Recording attendance

(a) 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

(b) Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by a time set by the school or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office/absence line on 01782 235040 or by email to stpeter@stpetersnewman.co.uk (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.

(c) 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 and attend before and/or after the appointment.

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. Please see section 5 to find out more about leave of absences requests.

(d) Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late 'L', using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent 'U', using the appropriate code

(e) Following up unexplained absence

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

- Text/email/telephone 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 carry out a home visit.
- 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 school will consider involving the Collegiate Education Welfare Officer the Academy Safeguarding Manager, Local Authority Education Welfare and Children Missing Education.

(f) Reporting to parents/carers

In line with DfE expectations, the school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly reports, attendance letters, attendance texts.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

(a) Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be '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 school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request,

Examples of exceptional circumstances where leave *may* be granted during term time include:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if the Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs". If necessary the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Examples of circumstances **NOT** considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitment.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

(b) Legal sanctions for an unauthorised leave of absence

If a term time leave of absence over five school days is not agreed and it is recorded as unauthorised absence in the register, this will automatically be referred to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority which could result in:

- a Penalty Notice (fine) Payment of Penalty Notices within 21 days is £60 per parent/carer, per child, and payment after this time, but within 28 days is £120 per parent/carer, per child.
- Non-payment of the Penalty Notice may result in legal action for non-school attendance which could result in prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act, where, if convicted a parent/carer may be fined up to £1000.

If two or more leave of absences under five days are taken during the academic year which add up to over five days, this will automatically be referred Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority which could result in the fines as above.

If a leave of absence has been taken under five school days and a penalty notice fine has not been issued, other additional recorded unauthorised absence alongside the leave of absence could result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority which could result in a Penalty Notice Warning being issued. During a warning period, attendance is monitored for a period of 20 days and if there is unauthorised absence during this time, it may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. Payment of Penalty Notices is the same as above.

If a student is unexpectedly absent the day(s) before, or after any planned leave of absence which then means the absence is over five school days, the school may consider this as one period of unauthorised absence relating to a holiday (or other reason) and refer to the Local Authority which may result in a fine unless medical evidence or proof of evidence which confirms the original holiday dates applied for can be provided.

The maximum number of Penalty Notices/fines which the Local Authority will issue in respect of an individual child in a twelve month period is two. The Local Authority will then consider presenting the case at the Magistrates Court were prosecution may be considered.

If a student fails to attend the academy and their whereabouts are unknown, or, does not return to school on the date expected following a leave of absence the academy will implement the Local Authority's 'Children Missing Education' process on day six of non attendance. On the twenty first day of non-attendance, the academy has the right to remove the student from the academy roll. The student will need to re-apply for a place. This may not be guaranteed due to other students who may be on the waiting list and the academy being oversubscribed.

(c) Authorised absence

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include but are not limited to:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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

7. Attendance monitoring

We will monitor attendance and absence data on a weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly basis across the school and at an individual pupil level. We will identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and require support.

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.

Where a student's attendance becomes a concern and they fall below the primary/secondary target of 97%, the academy will implement their monitoring system. We will work proactively with parents and pupils to improve their attendance. Parents/carers will be informed about any attendance concerns via telephone calls, school communications, letters, meetings at the academy, home visits, open evenings and reports.

At the end of each term, colour coded letters are sent out and monitoring attendance letters are sent as appropriate

(a) Analysing attendance

We 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

(b) Using data to improve attendance

We will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], 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

(c) 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. Parent/carers will receive attendance letters, telephone calls, be invited in for a meeting once thresholds have been met.

If a student's absence is persistent, a letter will be sent home advising that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided. This can be in the form of a GP letter, medical appointment card or the label from any prescribed medication in the pupil's name, covering the period of absence.

At any point, the Collegiate Education Welfare Officer may become involved and carry out home visits, attendance clinics, late gates and offer support and advice around attendance and punctuality concerns.

The Academy will look at working with and meeting with parents and pupils to remove potential barriers to school attendance and offer support which may involve external support agencies, Early Help, Family Support etc.

If there is no improvement, and the absence is not authorised, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority and a statutory penalty notice warning letter may be issued, a

formal referral made and the statutory legal intervention process would be implemented. This could lead to a penalty notice fine, or prosecution in the Magistrates Court for non-school attendance.

5.3 Legal sanctions for unauthorised absence

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The Education Welfare Service may take the following legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law:

- A Penalty Notice payable of **a £60 or £120 fine.**
- Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000.**
- Prosecution under s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.**

8. Policy Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every academic year by the Catholic Senior Executive Leader (CSEL). The policy will be presented at the full governing board (at school level) and full Board of Directors (at MAC level).

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance

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
Authorised absence		
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		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)

O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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

Template letters

First letter – Primary

At **St Peter's Catholic Academy** we are committed to supporting all of our pupils so that they achieve their full potential. We know that parents want their children to be happy at school, enjoy learning and to have the best start in life. We also know from research that children who are in school more regularly achieve better grades. We expect excellent attendance from all of our children and appreciate parental support in achieving this.

Your child's attendance is currently ____%. There are ____ late marks recorded since September.

We monitor every child's attendance in school and use the following guide when checking attendance:

100% Outstanding achievement – Well done, we're impressed!

98% - 99% Excellent Attendance
Your child is absent for less than 4 days in the school year

97% - 96% Good attendance
Your child could be missing up to 7 days of learning in the school year

95% - Just Below Attendance Target
Your Child's attendance may be monitored by the Academy Attendance Officer, they could be missing up to 2 weeks of learning in the school year which can make it harder for children to keep up in class

94% - 90% We are concerned, improvement is needed
Your Child's attendance will be monitored by the Academy Attendance Officer, they could be missing up to 4 weeks of learning in the school year.

Below 90% Serious Concern
Your child has been identified as a 'Persistently Absent Pupil' and their learning may be seriously affected by this. 90% equals 4 whole weeks of lessons missed. You may be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and could face a Penalty Notice Warning or fine from the Education Welfare Service

Your child's attendance percentage could be due to a significant period of absence, for example illness, which we understand is sometimes unavoidable. If this is the case, and your child continues to attend the academy regularly, then obviously the percentage will rise. Each week your child's attendance is assessed formally and you may be contacted to discuss this further.

Holidays/Leave during term time

As you will be aware, the academy cannot authorise any holidays/leave taken during term time. If taken, this may lead to a penalty notice warning/fine.

Again, thank you for supporting your child in achieving good attendance or working towards improving their attendance percentage. Please do not hesitate to contact the academy if you wish to discuss this further or any other issues which are impacting on your child's attendance that we are not already aware of.

Yours sincerely