



Attendance Policy 2021-2022

Approved by:

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**Next review due
by:** September 2022

Overview

St Ambrose R.C. Primary School creates an environment where its children enjoy coming to school because they enjoy learning and feel like valued members of the school community who are safe, secure and at ease.

Attendance levels at our school are good overall, due to the commitment of supportive parents/carers, the stimulating curriculum and the caring ethos of the school. We also work hard to maintain good levels of punctuality because we all recognise the disruption lateness causes both for the pupil who is late and for his/her classmates.

To maintain the high levels of attendance we would like to highlight the following points:

- You will be giving your child the best possible chance to reach his/her potential if s/he attends school regularly and on time.
- Taking your child out of school for a holiday should be avoided. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to do this. **The Headteacher is not permitted to grant any leave of absence during term unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holiday leave would not be considered an exceptional circumstance.**
- **If exceptional circumstances arise, a request must be sought in writing, before the absence.**
- In those cases where permission is not granted your child will be considered absent without authorisation. This will result in action being taken against a parent/carer. Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, an authorised officer of the City Council will issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice for each of their children who do not attend school regularly. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may result in direct court case. If a child's attendance does not improve, or a child is taken out of school again for a holiday following a penalty notice, then the authorised officer of the City Council will action a direct court case.
- The school monitors attendance carefully and uses the data in a number of ways, including picking up any problems a child might be experiencing at school or at home. Teachers will talk to children and parents/carers if they suspect a problem to try to resolve the issue and improve attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to alert class teachers if their child appears reluctant to attend school.
- It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child is in school everyday and to report to school each day if they are unfit to attend school. **If a child is not in school and we do not hear from a parent and there is no response when school contacts the parent by phone or by home visit then relevant services will be contacted.** It is schools responsibility to safeguard every child.

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

- 1.2 St Ambrose R.C. Primary School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise their educational opportunities, and to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults.
- 1.3 This school values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- 1.4 We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community and that poor attendance can be indicative of a number of underlying problems. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

2. Legal Framework

- 2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.2 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 2.3 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 2.4 The register must record whether the pupil was:
 - present;
 - absent;
 - present at approved educational activity; or
 - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Categorising absence

- 3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- 3.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. We expect parents/carers to keep us informed throughout a child's absence from school. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carers, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be

agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers. We ask parents to send in evidence of medication prescribed by the doctor or hospital. If a child is to be off for 3 days or more we require a medical certificate from the child's G.P. or a stamped school medical card (available from the school office) stating that the child is too ill to attend school. Telephone calls are made to every parent/carer of a student who is absent from school each morning. If we cannot make contact, a text message is sent. We can offer support from our school nurse if required.

3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.5 **Illness** In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where their child is absent for more than 3 days or where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of a prescription, a medical certificate from the child's G.P. or a stamped school medical card.

3.6 **Medical/Dental Appointments** Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card/letter to school.

3.7 **Other Authorised Circumstances** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

3.8 **Excluded (No alternative provision made)** Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

3.9 Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to **exceptional** circumstances must send a written request to the Headteacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**.

3.9.1 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The conditions of leave granted
- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

3.9.2 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

- 3.9.3 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school will issue a Penalty Notice (see 8.3).
- 3.9.4 Only in **very exceptional circumstances** will absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases, granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify the leave of absence.
- 3.10 **Religious Observance** This school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.
- 3.10.1 It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.
- 3.10.2 Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.
- 3.10.3 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.
- 3.11 **Traveller Absence** The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.
- 3.11.1 To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.
- 3.11.2 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
- 3.11.3 When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- 3.11.4 St Ambrose R.C. Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at

St Ambrose R.C. Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

3.11.5 The school can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

3.11.6 The school will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

3.11.7 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

3.11.8 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

3.12 **Late Arrival** Registration begins at **9.00am**. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late and the number of minutes later will be recorded. The register will close at **9.15am**. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

3.12.1 Pupils arriving after 9:00am must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

3.12.2 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

3.12.3 The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

3.13 **Unauthorised absence** Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

3.13.1 Examples of **UNSATISFACTORY EXPLANATIONS INCLUDE:**

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for Teacher Training Days (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"

- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

4. Deletions from the Register

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended leave of absence after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

4.2 St Ambrose R.C. Primary School will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 This school believes that **excellent** school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the Governor's School Improvement Committee to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site

- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

5.2 The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.3 All staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation

- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families including the school nurse and Early Help team.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.4 Request that Parents will:

- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties, for example, struggling to keep up or experiencing bullying of any type
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Headteacher in advance of booking the holiday

6. Using Attendance Data

- 6.1 Pupil attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
- 6.2 Every half term the school will provide all class teachers with attendance data for September to the current date for each pupil within their class.
- 6.4 The Senior Leadership Team will receive a complete set of data.
- 6.5 This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).
- 6.6 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- 6.7 St Ambrose R.C. Primary School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

6.8 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

7. Support Systems

7.1 Schools recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required, we can signpost parents to the school nurse, Caritas Social worker and complete and Early Help Assessment to gauge the level of need.

For its part, this school will investigate any issues within school which may be having a detrimental effect on a child's attendance.

7.2 We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

7.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support

7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

7.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, we will consider the use of legal sanctions.

8. Legal Sanctions

8.1 **Prosecution** Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a

prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

- 8.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.
- 8.1.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.
- 8.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.
- 8.2 **Parenting Contracts** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.
- 8.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.
- 8.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.
- 8.2.3 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.
- 8.3 **Penalty Notices** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be issued when:
- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
 - A pupil has accumulated at least six sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve
- 8.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued, per parent, per child.
- 8.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- 8.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions

Pupils with attendance between 100% to 97%

Pupils will be rewarded within the school's merit system.

The class teacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management.

Pupils with attendance between 96% and 94%

Class teacher will speak to the pupil and parent / carer to:

- Welcome the pupil back to school
- Confirm with the pupil the reason for absence and offer any support that may be required
- Update the pupil on work they have missed and support any catch up required

In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with the pupil, a letter will be sent to parents advising of concern and outlining the parents' responsibilities

Where improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents / carers will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve.
- Parenting contract agreed
- Penalty Notice 15 school day monitoring period commences
- Agree a review date

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.

The class teacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management.

Pupils with attendance between 91% and 93%

The Head or Deputy Headteacher with the class teacher will speak to the pupil to:

- Identify underlying home/school issues that may be causing the pupil's absence
- Review the pupil's academic progress and make links to the pupil's attendance e.g. If you attended all your classes you could achieve...
- Make arrangements for the pupil to catch up on work they have missed
- Work closely with the parents / carers to improve attendance

In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with the parents, a letter will be sent to parents advising of concern and outlining the parents' responsibilities

If improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve.
- Parenting contract agreed
- Penalty Notice 15 school day monitoring period commences
- Agree a review date

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.

Where these interventions have already been implemented and have had unsatisfactory impact, the parent will be invited to an Attendance Panel where the possible outcomes will be:

- Complete an Early Help assessment gauging the level of need leading to multi agency support
- Refer to the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings

Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without providing a satisfactory reason, a minimum of two home visits with the purpose to engage with the parent will be carried out prior to the referral to the Local Authority.

The Head or Deputy Headteacher with the class teacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management.

Pupils with attendance below 90%

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are considered to be **persistently absent** from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, pupils will be grouped in to one of the following categories:

- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
- Special Educational Needs
- Long term non attendance
- Parental support/needs e.g. parental drug use, young carers, domestic violence
- School issues e.g. bullying, poor teacher/pupil relationship, curriculum issues
- Offended or have an Anti-Social Behaviour Order
- English as an Additional Language
- Ethnic minority
- Mid-Year Admissions
- Gifted and Talented
- Other

An identified member of staff will:

- Ensure that the pupil has already spoken to a member of staff at the stages proceeding.
- Obtain records of previous contact and interventions escalate accordingly.
- Ensure that weekly contact occurs with the pupil either individually or within a small group to address themed issues.
- Ensure that weekly contact occurs with the parents to discuss any arising issues and to provide feedback on their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil that will see the pupil move to the band above.
- Review existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the pupil's attendance and any additional needs
- Be the key contact person for any external agency working with the pupil
- Input into whole school strategies to address the needs of pupils within their group

Each identified member of staff will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and Headteacher.

Attendance will be an item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team meetings where the progress of these children will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management.

The Headteacher will report the attendance data to the Governors each term.