EMMAUS
CATHOLIC MAC

Attendance Policy

Version:	3.0
Date created/updated:	September 2026
Ratified by:	Full Board
Date ratified:	21.09.2026
Date issued:	21.09.2026
Policy Review Date:	August 2027
Post Holder Responsible for Review:	MAC Inclusion Lead/CEO

Commitment to Equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

This Attendance Policy has been approved and adopted by Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Company on 21st September 2026 and will be reviewed again in August 2027.

Signed by Director of Emmaus MAC: P Bentley

Signed by CEO for Central Team: S Horan

This policy applies to all Emmaus Catholic MAC schools and settings.

Mission:
Forming Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice.

Table of Changes

Section and Change	Very Brief Description of the Change
Aims and Ethos	Removed outdated references to pandemic-related attendance disruption.
Safeguarding and Attendance	Strengthened links between attendance, safeguarding, wellbeing and vulnerability.
Working Together to Improve School Attendance	Added greater emphasis on vulnerable groups and attendance.
Legal Framework	Updated statutory attendance and safeguarding legislation references.
Definitions	Revised Children Absent from Education wording to reflect safeguarding expectations.
Barriers to Attendance	Updated Early Help references to Family Help.
Barriers to Attendance	Added expectations regarding reasonable adjustments and phased returns.
Staff Training on Attendance	Added training requirements relating to self-harm, suicidal ideation and mental health.

Staff Training on Attendance	Added training requirements relating to vulnerable groups and attendance.
School Procedures: Attendance Registers	Clarified requirements for consistent registration times.
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Strengthened links between attendance concerns and safeguarding processes.
First Day of Absence Response	Updated and formalised first-day response procedures.
Persistent Absence	Updated support expectations in line with current DfE guidance.
Severe Absence	Added dedicated section for pupils with attendance below 50%.
Persistent Absence and Reintegration	Clarified expectations regarding remote education and reduced timetables.
Following Up Unexplained Absence	Strengthened multi-agency working with social workers where applicable.
Reporting to Parents	Increased emphasis on early parental communication regarding attendance concerns.
Roles and Responsibilities: DSL	Expanded DSL responsibilities in relation to attendance and safeguarding.
Appendix 1: Attendance Codes	Updated attendance codes in line with current statutory requirements.
Policy Review Information	Updated review dates and statutory guidance references.

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1. Vision and Purpose

At Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Company (MAC), we have a clear vision for attendance for all learners. We will work together, as a community of parents/carers/teachers and pupils/students to promote attendance.

We believe that good attendance means attending school on time, every day, unless the reason for absence is absolutely unavoidable.

Valuable learning time is lost when learners are absent or late. Learners should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Staff and families must be aware that attendance at school is linked to pupil/student achievement but is also a key safeguarding trigger, which is why they should be vigilant and rigorous in following protocols.

We recognise our vocation to educate our young people to enable them to take their place in society as children of God, made in His image and likeness. We will work together, as a community of Directors, Local Governing Bodies, parents/carers, staff and pupils/students to promote attendance and will work consistently towards a goal of 100% attendance for all.

This is a common Emmaus MAC policy which will be contextualised to reflect the setting of each MAC school. This policy has been contextualised for St George's Catholic Primary School.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure staff and parents/carers are aware of their responsibilities.
- To advise parents/carers on their duty regarding pupil/student absence and relevant practices to report absence.
- To advise on practices and protocols in place to monitor, track and resolve pupil/student absence from school.
- To ensure that the monitoring and tracking of pupil/student absence and its safeguarding significance is clear.
- To ensure 'good-outstanding' school attendance remains a part of the ethos and culture of the school.

2. Aims and Ethos

St George's Catholic Primary School will ensure that every pupil/student has access to full time education and will act as early as possible to address unacceptable levels of absence.. Never has there been a more pressing time to reinforce the expectations we have for 'good' (96-100%) pupil/student attendance at school and we will work closely with parents/carers, pupils/students and stakeholders to realise this.

To improve school attendance, we recognise that building positive relationships with parents/carers is vital; it is only through clear lines of communication and an understanding of each individual context that progress can be made and we accept that this can take time. We aim to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. Promoting and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community. Poor attendance can be symptomatic of a variety of issues and we recognise that incidents of Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is on the rise nationally.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils/students and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent or carer. Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers and carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

The policy is part of the Safeguarding suite of policies. The school will inform the Local Authority of any pupil/student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- Transfer in-year to another school.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

The school track and monitor all types of transfer, from transition to in-year transfers, to ensure the process adheres to the 5-day window as specified by the DfE (Department for Education). This file is managed by the Safeguarding Lead.

St George's Catholic Primary School will also monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils/students as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil/student's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities.

As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil/student who is absent from school when the school has made all reasonable enquiries and cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil/student's welfare and safety. Attendance, safeguarding, behaviour, wellbeing and attainment information will be analysed together to identify vulnerable pupils, emerging risks and barriers to attendance. Attendance is recognised as a key safeguarding indicator and concerns may be escalated through safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures can be found following the link below:

4. Working together to improve school attendance

From the 19th August 2024, working together to improve school attendance guidance from the DfE became statutory. This means that in addition to our ongoing commitment to working with and supporting families, we also adopted the following measures (in appropriate circumstances):

- Put formal support in place in the form or an Attendance Contract, or an Education Supervision Order. This will be in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- Issue Notices to Improve and/or Penalty Notices where support would not be appropriate or has not been successfully engaged with and is unlikely to change behaviour.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns, particularly where absence becomes 'severe' (below 50%).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a Community or Parenting Order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.
- Inform the Local Authority where a pupil/student absence reaches or exceeds 15 days.
- Fine for non-attendance due to family holidays: from August 2024, the fine administered by Worcestershire County Council for school absences will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.
- Revisions have been made to attendance codes: The government has also created additional "C" absence codes. While C will be for "exceptional circumstances", C1 will be for absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad. C2 will be for pupils/students on part-time timetables.
- A new code Q will be for pupils/students "unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements".
- The current code Y will be split up, as follows:

  Y1: Absence due to transport normally provided not being available
  Y2: Widespread disruption to travel
  Y3: Part of the school is closed
  Y4: Unexpected whole school closure (different from code # for planned closures)
  Y5: For pupils in the criminal justice system
  Y6: Absence due to public health guidance or law Y7: Any
  other unavoidable cause

The school will be particularly mindful of pupils who are persistently absent, severely absent, have a social worker, are young carers, have SEND, or experience mental or physical ill health, as these groups may require additional support to secure regular attendance.

5. Department for Education Guidance

From the 19th August 2024, DfE guidance titled Working Together to Improve School Attendance became statutory. We are guided by the following principles:

Guiding Principles as recommended by the DFE:

Expect

Our journey with Christ

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and Understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them

Facilitate Support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole gamily plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise Support

Where absence persist and voluntary support is not working or not being engage with, patterns should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Following this guidance also means that in addition to our ongoing commitment to working with and supporting families, we also adopted the following measures (in appropriate circumstances) as outlined in Section 4, Summary of Changes.

6. Key Personnel

Attendance Officer:

The SLT (Senior Leadership Team) link for attendance: Miss Cairns
The Principal Miss Cairns is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances.' (kcairns@emmausmac.com)
The school's SENDCo (xxxxxxxxx@emmausmac.com)

We work with Worcestershire Education Engagement Team (01905 844 440)

7. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following: Education Act 2011
Equality Act 2010
The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
DfE 'Children Missing Education'
DfE School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance
DfE - The latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
Data (Use and Access) Act 2025

8. Definitions

In accordance with the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, we recognise that:

- Children absent from education may present a safeguarding concern and will be responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures and statutory attendance guidance.
- 'Persistent Absence' means absence of 10% or more. 'Severely
- Absent' means an absence of 50% or more.

The school defines 'absence' as either:

- Arriving at school after the register has closed. Not
- attending school for any reason.

The school defines 'authorised absence' as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave. An
- absence due to a family emergency.

The school defines 'unauthorised absence' as:

- Parents/carers keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

9. How Attendance Impacts Education

Evidence shows pupils/students with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Pupils/students who attend regularly are more likely to achieve better results than their peers that do not, both at Key Stage 2 tests in the Primary phase, and in Key Stage 4 tests in the Secondary phase.

Excellent attendance enables pupils/students to be part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each young person's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days Absent	Equivalent Sessions Absent	Equivalent Weeks Absent
100%	0 days	0 sessions	0 weeks
95%	9 days	18 Sessions	2 weeks
90%	19 days	38 Sessions	4 weeks
85%	29 days	58 Sessions	6 weeks
80%	38 days	72 Sessions	8 weeks
75%	48 days	96 Sessions	10 weeks
70%	57 days	114 Sessions	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	134 Sessions	13.5 weeks

10. Supporting Pupils/Students to Attend School

At St George's Catholic Primary School we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children, of compulsory school age, attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils/students to attend school every day. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils/students to enjoy school and grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential requirements in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the world.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school". Therefore, if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil/student's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

The school will take all opportunities to promote good attendance including regular communication with parents/carers; attendance as a regular agenda item for pastoral meetings; assemblies and appropriate rewards. Rewarding students who have consistently excellent attendance and those pupils/students with significantly improved attendance deserve to be recognised and celebrated. This may take the following forms: praise postcards; positive attendance raffles; house points; attendance certificates; any other appropriate initiative sanctioned by the Principal.

11. Barriers to Attendance

The DfE have outlined that the level for persistent absence is 10% and therefore a young person who has an attendance percentage of 90% or below will be treated in accordance with our persistent absence procedures and will be closely monitored by DSLs and the Principal.

We anticipate that a young person will have received several supportive interventions before reaching the persistent absence threshold which may include meetings with parents; mentoring; academic

review; therapeutic support; referrals for external or internal family help. This list is not exhaustive, and we will aim to tailor our approach where practicable, to the needs of the individual child.

Where persistent absence does not decrease, or a young person has unauthorised absences, the school is legally entitled to make referrals to the local authority for a penalty notice or legal proceedings to be issued. The school and the Local Authority are committed to working together to raise attendance levels. This could take the form of Parenting Contracts, Education Supervision Orders, prosecution, Parenting Orders, or fixed penalty notices (as decided by the nature of the case)

We also recognise the growth in Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and Severe Absence (those pupils/students missing 50% or more) and acknowledge that a variety of safeguarding related issues may impact upon high absence. Poor mental health, concerns around bullying, peer relationships and challenging home lives all influence a pupil/student's ability and desire to attend. We will address each unique situation as such and work with young people and their families to facilitate happy and productive returns to school. Where attendance concerns relate to SEND, disability, mental health or medical needs, the school will consider reasonable adjustments and, where appropriate, time-limited phased returns to support reintegration into full-time education.

12. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils/students. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of pupil/student registers, the
- school/MAC's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance. processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for pupils/students
- who need it.
  identifying potentially at-risk pupils/students as part of their inductions and annual refresher
- training.
  that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such
- concerns should be managed.
  the relationship between attendance, self-harm, suicidal ideation, mental ill-health and safeguarding
- concerns.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils/students experiencing attendance challenges. Specialist attendance staff will also receive training regarding the attendance needs of vulnerable groups including pupils with a social worker, young carers and pupils with SEND.

13. School Procedures

13.1 Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil/student in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school,

information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils/students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil/student will attend.

A pupil/student's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies. It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

13.2 Contents of Attendance Register

In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil/student is:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System (MIS) to record attendance information. Reasons for absence and lates are recorded on our MIS system in school with details of times as necessary.

Registers will be taken at the same published time for all pupils during both the morning and afternoon registration sessions.

13.3 Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils/students are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil/student leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Principal, Vice Principal and Pastoral lead will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

13.4 Lateness

The register, at all Emmaus Catholic MAC schools, will close 30 minutes after the start of registration.

If a pupil/student arrives after the register has closed, they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil/student is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly.

Summary of morning and afternoon registration closure times are as follows:

Year Group(s)	Morning Registration starts at:	Morning Registration closes at:	Afternoon Registration starts at:	Afternoon registration closes at:
Years 5 and 6	8.50am	9.20am	1pm	1.30pm
Years 3 and 4	8.50am	9.20am	1pm	1.30pm
Year 1 and 2	8.50am	9.20am	1pm	1.30pm
Reception	8.50am	9.20am	1pm	1.30pm

See DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

Effects of Late Arrival at School
When a pupil/student arrives late to school, they miss important events such as assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

Minutes late per day…	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year …	Which means this number of lessons have been missed…
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

13.5 Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil/student of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

Illness
The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.
We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil/student's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil/student.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil/student has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents should report their child's absence via contacting the school office either by phone or email.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Well-being
Our school supports pupil/student mental health and wellbeing following Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact the school office.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Where attendance concerns are linked to self-harm, suicidal ideation, significant anxiety or deteriorating mental health, concerns will be managed through both attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Pupils/students taken ill during the school day
If a pupil/student needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil/student must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out on Inventry. No pupil/student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Medical/Dental Appointments
As far as possible, parents/carers should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, advance notice, via a note and appointment card should be presented to the school – only then will the absence be authorised.
If the appointment requires the pupil/student to leave during the school day, the pupil/student must be signed out by a parent/carer via Inventry. No pupil/student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Pupils/Students must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible and every effort to should be made to keep lost learning time to an absolute minimum.

Young Carers
The school understands the difficulties young carers face and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school.

The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

Religious Observance
Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller Absence
The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil/student of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Suspensions
If the school decides to send a pupil/student home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a suspension.

The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on suspension and exclusions.

Any suspension must be agreed by the Principal.

The school will notify the parent of the suspension in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil/student's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil/student is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil/student must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out on InVentry. No pupil/student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

13.6 First Day of Absence Response

School will follow first day calling procedures when a child is absent from school.

13.7 Leave of Absence Requests - Exceptional Circumstances

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Governors if necessary. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil/student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should request a Leave of Absence using the absence request form which can be submitted to the school office via email or as a paper copy.The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence. Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing. Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

All term time absence for Children in Care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

13.8 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil/student is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Pupils/students who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips.
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a service or a delivery.
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school).
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil/student is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, use of penalty notices or prosecution.

Truancy

Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. This includes inappropriate parentally condoned absence, holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil/student might be truanting.

If truancy is suspected, DSL and Principal will contact the child's parents/carers, to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- Any pupil/student who truants from school will make up the hours lost in detention. Any
- pupil/student who truants within the parameters of the school day by deliberately missing or avoiding lessons/in-school events will be sanctioned, and all lost time will be made up in detention.
- In some circumstances, the school can liaise with the local authority and consider issuing a penalty notice. This may be issued where there is overt truancy.

The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil/student will inform SLT immediately.
The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by SLT.
The following areas will be systematically searched:

- All classrooms
- All toilets
- Changing rooms
- The Cube
- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds

- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
If the student has not been found within 10 minutes, then the parents/carers of the pupil/student will be notified.

- The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contacts provided. If
- the parents/carers have had no contact from the pupil/student, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil/student's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil/student going missing.
- If the missing pupil/student has an allocated social worker, is a Looked After Child, or has SEND (Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities), then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil/student has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the pupil/student to ensure they are safe and well.
- The Principal will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil/student understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Parents/carers
- and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil/student has been located.
- The SLT will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with our Persistent Absence procedure, statutory guidance, and the local authority. Pastoral
- Leadership Team will be involved in any review or amendment to current practice, based upon case studies.

13.9 Persistent and Severely Absence

Persistent Absence

The DfE have outlined that the level for persistent absence is 10% and therefore a pupil/student who has an attendance percentage of 90% or below for whatever reason will be treated in accordance with our persistent absence procedures and the pupil/student will be closely monitored by a SLT and DSLs.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil/student that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

We anticipate that a pupil/student will have received several supportive interventions before reaching the persistent absence threshold which may include meetings with parents; mentoring; academic review; therapeutic support; referrals for external or internal early help. This list is not exhaustive, and we will aim to tailor our approach where practicable, to the needs of the individual child.

In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, to support pupils/students to reintegrate back into education and access full time provision. Remote education will only be used as a short-term support strategy and not as an alternative to full-time attendance unless required through legislation, medical advice or other exceptional circumstances.

Where persistent absence does not decrease, or a pupil/student has unauthorised absences, the school is legally entitled to make referrals to the local authority for a penalty notice or legal proceedings to be issued. The school and the Local Authority are committed to working together to raise attendance levels. This could take the form of Parenting Contracts, Education Supervision Orders, prosecution, Parenting Orders, or fixed penalty notices (as decided by the nature of the case).

Severe Absence

Pupils with attendance below 50% will be considered severely absent. These pupils will receive enhanced monitoring, senior leader oversight and multi-agency support in line with DfE guidance. Individual plans will be developed to address barriers to attendance and improve engagement with education.

13.10 Approved Educational Activity

When pupil/students are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil/student is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil/student to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil/student is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil/student attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provision setting. (Please see our school's Alternative Provision policy)

13.11 Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils/students as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause.
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil/student's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's 'Home to school travel and transport' guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy). A local or
- national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil/student from attending school.
- The pupil/student is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil/student is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity').

13.12 Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 3 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the O code. If we are concerned about a pupil/student's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil/student's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil/student's whereabouts and safety.

Where a pupil has an allocated social worker, the school will work proactively with the social worker to address attendance concerns and unexplained absences where appropriate.

14. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils/students can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils/students to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil/student's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil/student is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils/students and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil/student, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan or parenting contract being drawn up.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and pupils/students and that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter and school records will be shared with the Local Authority.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or, fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.
If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil/student who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

15. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil/student at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil/student at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil/student's irregular attendance.

See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information.

Penalty notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

16. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils/students from roll in line with Regulation 8 Education law. The school will use the Worcestershire children's services portal to report any children leaving our school, on part time timetables, attending irregularly, or joining the school outside of usual transition phases. If we have any CME related concerns we will contact CME@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

17. Reporting to Parents

Attendance is shared with parents termly via parents evening and school reports. Where necessary attendance may be shared with parents more frequently. In all cases, this gives parents the opportunity to look at their child's attendance certificate and come back to you with any queries.

Where a child's attendance falls below expectation and is concerning, for whatever reason, our school will contact parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to. Parents will be informed promptly where attendance falls below 95%, patterns of absence emerge, or attendance concerns present a safeguarding risk.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

At St George's Catholic Primary School everyone is responsible for monitoring attendance. We work relentlessly as a team to ensure that children are happy to attend school.

Attendance is monitored by SLT and we work with children and families with any attendance concerns.

The Attendance Team work together to:

- Follow-up action-plans for pupils/students with low attendance.
- Make referrals to outside agencies.
- Monitor attendance data across school and individual pupil/student level. Reports
- concerns about attendance to the Principal/attendance lead/ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls, home visits and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the Attendance/DS Leads and Safeguarding Team) and advises the Principal as requested.

The Local Governing Body (LGB):

- The LGB is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis and through regular sharing of attendance figures and subsequent actions half termly with the Attendance/Safeguarding LGB Link Governor.
- They should also support the promotion of regular attendance and provide support and challenge holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal:

- The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB. The
- Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils/students and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Vice Principal:

- The Vice Principal supports the Principal in implementing the policy and monitoring attendance. This includes championing attendance across the whole school, interrogating attendance data by group, such as pupils/students entitled to Free School Meals, Pupil Premium pupils/students, pupils/students with SEND, Children in Care, attendance by Ethnicity and Language (English/EAL), as well as being part of the attendance escalation process within the school, and chairing formal attendance meetings etc.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Monitoring attendance alongside safeguarding, behaviour and wellbeing information to identify emerging risks.

Ensuring attendance concerns presenting safeguarding risks are managed appropriately.

Working with external agencies where absence is linked to welfare concerns.

Supporting staff to understand the safeguarding significance of attendance patterns. Contributing to attendance strategy and escalation processes for vulnerable pupils.

SENDCo:

The SENDCo is responsible for ensuring that pupils/students with special educational needs and disabilities are supported to attend school regularly.

Works closely with the Attendance Team, Heads of Year, and DSL to identify barriers to attendance and implement personalised support plans.

Liaises with external agencies where appropriate to secure additional support for pupils/students with SEND.

Monitors attendance data for pupils/students with SEND and contributes to the attendance escalation process where necessary.

- Ensures reasonable adjustments are made to support attendance and engagement, and that these are documented and reviewed regularly

Class Teachers:

- Class Teachers have the responsibility of registering pupil/students' attendance at the beginning of the morning session and must close registers within the first 30 minutes of the start of the school day.
- The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each subsequent lesson. Absences should have been pre-populated by the Attendance Officer and under no circumstances should teachers overwrite this, unless the pupil/student has been marked Absent but is present (this may occur where pupils/students have been to appointments and have returned early).
- Where pupils/students are absent from their lessons for any reason (Mass band; Chaplaincy; in school appointments; the Medical room etc) then the member of staff responsible for this must ensure the register is taken correctly and the pupil/student is accounted for.
- The school will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The codes to be used can be found in Appendix 1.

Parents/Carers must:

- Support the ethos that school attendance is of paramount importance.
- Notify the school office by telephone on 01905 25841 if their child is unwell or unable to attend school for any reason as soon as possible on the first day of any absence but by 9am at the latest and on the morning of every additional day.
- Arrange appointments for their child outside normal school sessions and collect their child from school for any appointment that is unavoidable during school time.
- If appointments are to be taken in school time every effort should be made to ensure a pupil/student is in school by 9.20am or the appointment is after 1pm. Arrange to collect their child from school whenever the child is deemed unfit to remain during the school day.
- Will keep requests to remove their child from school during term time to a minimum as the Principal can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and if the leave request is granted, the Principal will determine the length of time that the learner can be away from school. However, leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.
- Parents/carers must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Parents/carers are responsible for updating the school if the details change.
- Parents/carers must provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- We expect parents/carers to fully cooperate with the attendance processes in place. A range of legal interventions may be put into place once all other avenues have been exhausted.

19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by MAC Inclusion Lead, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with and ratified by the Board of Directors.

20. Links with other policies/procedures

This policy is linked to the following policies and procedures:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Early Help Offer
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Attendance Codes	
/	Present in the morning
\	Present in the afternoon
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
C	Authorised absence
C1	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Pupils on part time timetables
E	Suspended/Excluded but no alternative provision made
H	Authorised holiday
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
B	Off-site educational activity
G	Unauthorised holiday
O	Unauthorised absence
U	Arrived after registration closed
N	Reason not yet provided
X	Not required to be in school
S	Study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence
W	Work experience
V	Educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority.
D	Dual registered – at another educational establishment
Y	Exceptional circumstances
Y1	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of the school is closed
Y4	Unexpected whole school closure (different from code # for planned closures)
Y5	For pupils in the criminal justice system
Y6	Absence due to public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Student not on admission register
#	Planned whole-school closure.
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements.