



Attendance Policy

2023-24

St Ambrose Catholic Academy is:



A member of

St Joseph

Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Transforming children's lives through a world-class Catholic education.

St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust Registered in England as a company limited by guarantee number 13245781. Registered offices: Floor 3 Regus, No 1 Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BP

Date Completed: December 2023
Review Date: October 2024

Introduction

St Ambrose recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for students within St Ambrose to support learning and achievement.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our young people every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all students attend regularly and on time. Students should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all students to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all students achieve at least 97%. **As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.**

St Ambrose believes Teachers, Parents, Carers, Students and all members of St Ambrose community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring students attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of student attendance and punctuality at St Ambrose.
- Reduce the number of students who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, students and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for students.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the St Joseph's Multi Academy Trust, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

Promoting regular Attendance at St Ambrose:

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and students. To help us all focus on this, St Ambrose will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to deter poor punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Students are provided with appropriate support to minimise disaffection from school. This includes St Ambrose and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After students and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of students' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular individual student incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with students in form time and at assemblies.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

Expectations of Parent/Carer

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child leaves for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible medical evidence must be provided.
- Contact school preferably by 9.00 am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a message is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to it to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact the Children's Mentor if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of two emergency contact details be provided)
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays. Absence Forms can be requested from the school reception.

If a student is absent we will

- Telephone Parent/Carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.15 am.
- If no response is received from the main contact we will proceed to contact other contacts listed for the child.
- If it is not possible to make contact and establish a reason for absence a member of school staff will conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a student continues to be absent we will contact again on day 3 and 5 for an update.
- If a student's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited to meet the Attendance Lead, Mrs Ward or Head of School, Mrs Moorcroft.
- If absences persist the Attendance Lead, Mrs Ward will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.
-

Understanding types of Absence

St Ambrose has to record every absence that a student takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by phone on the first day of absence.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised (please note providing an explanation for absence does not automatically mean it will be authorised). It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Students who arrive at school too late to get their mark (If punctuality is a persistent issue parents will be advised that their child will be recorded as a U code).

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. St Ambrose will issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 schools days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

Persistent Absence

- Students are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects Schools to intervene well before students reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that students can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a student is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the Children's Mentor, Mrs Ward in the first instance.

Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect students' learning. Students who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a student missing one half day of lessons per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

The DFE has published a strong link between poor school attendance and low levels of achievement:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school.
- St Ambrose and the EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the student's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists the EWO will be required to give consideration to the

instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

Leave of absence in Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice fine for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively.

The Headteacher cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving students disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the student arriving late and can encourage future absence. A range of support and sanctions apply to students who arrive late.

If poor punctuality is a persistent issue, parents will be informed in advance that any future lates will be recorded as a U code which will impact their overall attendance.

How we manage lateness

School gates open at 8.45am. The school day starts and registers are taken at 8.55am by the Class Teacher and students receive a late mark if they are not in their Class by that time.

- Parents of students who arrive persistently late to school will be contacted by the Children's Mentor, Mrs Ward to discuss and will be instructed further on actions that will be taken if punctuality does not improve.
- If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the Children's Mentor, Mrs Ward, who will offer support to resolve the problem.

People Responsible for Attendance matters at St Ambrose Academy

All school staff, parents/carers and students need to work as a team to support the attendance and attainment of students. This continued support therefore is vital in making every student's journey through school a success.

Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.

- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give the Attendance Lead, Mrs Ward comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

St Ambrose Catholic Academy: Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance

Whole School Approach

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on school site by 8.45 am • Be class on time for registration at 8.55 am
	Class Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set an example by arriving on time to register students by 8.55 am • Registers are completed on Arbor each day on time (within 5 minutes) • Ensure attendance has a high profile in class. • Discuss absence with students returning to school. • Welcoming long-term absentees back into the class • Discuss any concerns relating to a student absence with the Children’s Mentor and/or Main Office initiating follow up procedures.
	Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring staff have completed AM/PM registers • Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the register via Arbor. • Identify students who are absent from school without reason immediately. • Log on Arbor, parental voicemails, and emails regarding student absences. • Ensure all Late arriving students are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to Arbor. • Ring parent/carers who have failed to contact regarding their child’s absence as part of First Day Response. • If parents/carers are uncontactable, go through other listed contacts. • If it is not possible to make contact with anyone to establish reason for absence a home visit will be carried out (a letter will be posted requesting school is contacted immediately if there is no-one home). • Logging attendance of all students going out /in school for medical, dental or visits • Daily liaison with alternative curriculum providers for students off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and students who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the First Day contact systems.
	EWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence students and families. • Text and phone call contact with students/parent/carers • Home visits • Instigation of legal proceedings • Tracking of actions and interventions supporting Pastoral Coordinators with up actions with other members of staff

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all members of the Class know the school target and their current attendance • Monitor/follow up identified student non-attendance by making contact with parent/carers where appropriate, record of conversation sent to children's mentor • Update information on attendance boards • Organise help for students to catch up on work due to prolonged absence
	Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing EWO/SLT of student patterns of absence • Provide weekly student attendance figures for Class Teachers • Discuss punctuality issues with identified students and parent/carers • Monitoring of staff not completing registers in line with safeguarding requirements • Liaison with EWO regarding support work with identified students
	Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Attendance Lead

When	Whom	Actions Expected
HALF TERMLY	Headteacher with Attendance Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to student achievement • Use attendance data to identify and take action to improve the attendance of vulnerable students • Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy • Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents evenings • Liaise with EWO to share information and agree joint actions re action plans or other students causing concern

When	Whom	Actions Expected
TERMLY	Attendance Team/ Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all students both in School and those at off site provision • School Attendance Review alongside the EWO • Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, Subject Leaders and achievement Leaders for plans to raise attendance • Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across all departments and that systems are operating effectively. • Report to SLT on attendance matters • Ensure school prospectus, parent/carers welcome booklet and school newsletters promote Attendance • Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors