



# The Federation of The Annunciation Catholic Schools

*"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire"*

*St. Catherine of Siena*

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## The Federation of The Annunciation Catholic Schools Attendance Policy

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### 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- We will also 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.

## 2. Principles

Attendance is strongly linked to achievement. Good attendance is therefore necessary if pupils are to fulfil their academic and social potential at The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools.

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of all staff, pupils and parents/carers.

For high levels of attendance to be achieved: - good relationships are needed between home and school - a safe environment where pupils can enjoy attend and achieve success.

Strategies for dealing with both excellent and poor rates of attendance should be applied fairly and consistently to all pupils regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and religion.

Wherever possible there should be early intervention to deal positively with high levels of attendance and appropriately with low levels of attendance. This intervention will involve working with external agencies if appropriate.

Pupils with long-term medical needs or disabilities will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will not be bound by the systems and procedures in this policy.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 4. School procedures

### 4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

**Absent**

**Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**

**Any amendment to the attendance register will include:**

**The original entry**

**The amended entry**

**The reason for the amendment**

**The date on which the amendment was made**

**The name and position of the person who made the amendment**

**See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.**

**Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.**

**Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55 on each school day.**

**The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:10. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:20 and will be kept open until 1:30.**

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

**Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:10 or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office on 02089060723.**

**Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.**

**If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.**

**If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.**

#### **4.3 Medical or dental appointments**

**Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Please notify the office in advance of such appointments.**

**However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.**

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance in writing to the Headteacher. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If children are repeatedly late parents will be contacted by a member of the school's leadership. The school takes very seriously ongoing punctuality issues.

#### **4.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

We report your child's attendance annually to you in their written end-of-year report,

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

**Definition of Terms: Authorised absence** – It is the decision of the school to determine whether a pupil's absence is authorised or not. Authorised absence is absence that the school has approved. The school may approve absence for any reason that it deems appropriate.

**Unauthorised absence** – This relates to pupil absence that the school has decided not to approve. Absence is also unauthorised if a reason for pupil absence is not provided to the school by parents/carers.

#### **5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Religious observance

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

## **5.2 Targeting unauthorised attendance –**

**Where a pupil's attendance drops below 85% the following actions will be taken:-**

- An investigation to see if there are mitigating circumstances**
- Discussion with parents to resolve issues around poor attendance**
- Discussion with pupil**
- Letters home**
- Closer monitoring**
- Support from LA Welfare Attendance Officer**
- Issue penalty notice**

## **5.3 Legal sanctions**

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

### **Penalty notices**

**The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.**

**If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:**

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

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

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

**If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.**

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

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

### Notices to improve

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

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

They will include:

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

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Class attendance figures are published weekly.

Certificates are awarded at the end of each term for 100% attendance.

Certificates are awarded at the end of each year for 100% attendance.

The school works with parents to support regular attendance.

We communicate early about any attendance issues.

We acknowledge positive improvements in attendance.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The Office Manager and Headteacher monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

**If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.**

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Our school collects and stores attendance on our office system (Integris) and we use this system to help us to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

### **8.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Children, Family and Community Committee is responsible for attendance.

### **8.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Education Welfare Officer and to governors
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

### **8.3 The Deputy Head teacher**

Stands in for the Headteacher if they are absent

- Prepares a termly report on behaviour, absence and attendance for governors.

### **8.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **8.5 Office Manager**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system and enter data from class registers onto the school system.

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the SLT. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Date of Policy            November 2023

Review Date             September 2026

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	<b>Authorised leave of absence</b>	<b>Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Excluded</b>	<b>Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Authorised holiday</b>	<b>Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Illness</b>	<b>School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Medical/dental appointment</b>	<b>Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>	<b>Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Study leave</b>	<b>Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence</b>	<b>Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school</b>
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	<b>Unauthorised holiday</b>	<b>Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Reason not provided</b>	<b>Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	<b>School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Arrival after registration</b>	<b>Pupil arrived at school after the register closed</b>

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Not required to be in school</b>	<b>Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend</b>
<b>Y</b>	<b>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</b>	<b>School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody</b>
<b>Z</b>	<b>Pupil not on admission register</b>	<b>Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>Planned school closure</b>	<b>Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day</b>