St. Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School

"Through Jesus we achieve our very best"

Attendance Policy

January 2026 (updated)

Purpose

This Attendance Policy sets out the expectations of pupils, parents/carers and school staff to ensure pupils attend our school regularly and on time, enabling them to make the most of the educational opportunities available. The evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best exam results.

This policy aligns with Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024), which emphasises that promoting good attendance is **everyone's responsibility; school leaders, staff, parents, and the community.**

The policy also supports early intervention and collaboration with parents to remove barriers to attendance, in line with legal expectations and local authority guidance.

Aims

- To promote and achieve high levels of attendance, with a target of at least 97%.
- To ensure all pupils receive their entitlement to education.
- To comply with the expectations of the Department for Education and local authority.
- To work with parents and external agencies to remove barriers to attendance.
- To monitor attendance patterns and intervene early to prevent poor attendance becoming persistent.
- To comply with legal requirements for school attendance and punctuality.

Legal Framework

The policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (Amendment 2013)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (2016)

Definitions

Session

A school day is divided into two sessions (morning and afternoon), with attendance recorded in each.

Authorised Absence

Absences approved by the school, e.g., for illness, medical appointments, or religious observances.

Unauthorised Absence

Absences not approved by the school, e.g., holidays taken without approval or lateness after registers close.

Persistent Absence

Defined as attendance below 90%. Any pupil who is at the persistent absence threshold or at risk of moving towards that threshold will be a priority for intervention.

Severe Absence

Defined as attendance below 50%. Any pupil who is at the severe absence threshold is at serious risk of harm. There should be an intensive level of support, and where appropriate challenge, including the use of legal interventions to secure improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Local Governing Body

- Monitor and evaluate attendance data.
- Ensure compliance with legal frameworks.
- Support school leaders in setting attendance targets.

Headteacher

- Ensure the implementation of the Attendance policy.
- Monitor overall school attendance and punctuality.
- Make decisions on authorising absences.
- Provide reports to the governing body on attendance trends.

Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

- Lead on strategies to improve attendance.
- Analyse attendance data daily, weekly, and termly.
- Oversee communication with parents regarding attendance issues.
- Ensure compliance with the local authority's procedures for children missing education.

Attendance Officer / Administrator

- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Ensure first-day calling for unexplained absences.
- Follow up on absence patterns and report concerns to the Senior Leader.
- Prepare attendance data for analysis and reporting.

Class Teachers

- Mark attendance registers twice daily.
- Promote good attendance and punctuality in the classroom.
- Communicate any attendance concerns to the Attendance Lead.

Parents / Carers

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Inform the school of any absences before the start of the school day.
- Avoid term-time holidays.
- Work with the school to address any issues affecting their child's attendance.

Pupils

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Arrive prepared for the school day.
- Inform a member of staff if any issues are preventing regular attendance.

Registration Procedures

The school will ensure that an attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session.

Morning Session: Registers close at 9:00 AM

Afternoon Session: Registers are taken at 1:00 PM.

Registers will be marked using Department for Education Attendance and Absence codes

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session. **Children are expected to be in class by 9:00 AM**. A child arriving after 9:00 AM will receive an L code (Late). The reason for this will be recorded, alongside the child's name for monitoring purposes.

The **register closes at 9:20 AM**. Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (Code U as per DfE compulsory attendance codes).

The procedures for first day absence are then commenced by the Office Staff.

Where there is regular or a pattern of lateness, parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the issue.

Managing Absence

First Day of Absence: Parents/carers **must inform the school before 9:00 AM**. If no contact is made, the school will call home to ensure the child is safe.

Parents/carers should **contact school every day until the pupil returns to school** or alternatively indicate the length of the absence and the reasons why it is known the pupil will be unable to attend e.g. recovering from an operation. In these circumstances a 'check in' date must be agreed when the absence will be reviewed.

Failure to provide a reasonable explanation within 5 days of the start of the absence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised. In these circumstances legal interventions may be considered.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, not the parent/carer, to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with DfE regulations and guidance.

Persistent Absence (Below 90%): Pupils will be monitored closely, and interventions will be offered. Parents will be contacted for a meeting if attendance does not improve.

Severe Absence (Below 50%): This will trigger immediate intervention, involving the local authority if necessary. A multi-agency approach will be used to support the family.

Promoting Good Attendance

Whilst good attendance is a legal requirement and expected, the school will encourage and support all children and parents through a variety of avenues. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Rewards:** Regular attendance will be celebrated in assemblies and through rewards such as certificates, badges, or recognition in newsletters.
- **Parental Engagement:** The school will engage with parents through regular updates about the importance of attendance, providing tips and resources to help overcome barriers to attendance.
- **Early Intervention:** Attendance data will be analysed weekly, and early support will be provided to pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- **Targeted Intervention:** Re-engagement of persistent and severely absent pupils, in partnership with support services as required.

Legal Interventions

The school, in consultation with the local authority, will exercise its legal powers to address poor attendance in school. Details of the full range of legal interventions available to the school can be found in the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance.

If attendance does not improve despite support:

- Parents may receive warning letters.
- A penalty notice may be issued if 10 sessions of unauthorised absence occur within a term.
- Prosecution may be pursued under the Education Act 1996 if attendance continues to be an issue.

PLEASE NOTE: St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School, DOES NOT benefit financially from any fines that parents may receive.

The following tables indicate the number of missed days/weeks missed, depending on the pupil's attendance percentage.

Attendance	Missed days
100%	0
98%	Less than 4 days / 8 sessions
97%	Less than 6 days / 12 sessions
95%	9½ days / 19 sessions
90%	19 days / 38 sessions
85%	28½ days / 57 sessions
80%	38 days / 76 sessions

Attendance over 5 years	Missed weeks over 5 years
85-90%	19 weeks / ½ school year
80%	38 weeks / 1 whole school year

Illness and Medical Evidence

Reporting Illness

Parents must inform the school by 9:00 AM if their child is unwell and unable to attend school. Parents should provide a reason for the absence and, where possible, an expected return date.

Medical Evidence

In some cases, the school may request medical evidence to support absences due to illness, particularly in the following circumstances:

- Attendance falls below 90% (Persistent Absence): Medical evidence may be required to authorise future absences.
- Frequent Absences: Where there are repeated absences for illness without any long-term diagnosis, the school may request a doctor's note or prescription to confirm the reason.
- Prolonged Illness: If a child is absent for more than 5 consecutive days due to illness, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence.

Examples of acceptable medical evidence include:

- A doctor's note or letter.
- A copy of a prescription or medication packaging.
- A hospital appointment letter or discharge letter.

Failure to provide medical evidence when requested may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Procedure for Requesting Planned Absences

Planned Absence Request

Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time must submit an 'Exceptional circumstances – pupil term time leave request' form (available from the school office and in Appendix 1) at least 4 weeks in advance. This is in line with Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, which state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless exceptional circumstances exist.

Exceptional Circumstances

The school will only consider granting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, which **may** include:

- A close family member's funeral or critical illness.
- Participation in an elite sporting or cultural event (with supporting evidence).
- Recognised religious observances not already covered by school closures.

Circumstances not considered exceptional include (but are not limited to):

- Holidays during term time.
- Availability of cheaper travel or accommodation.
- Family celebrations or birthdays.

School Response

The Headteacher will review each request on a case-by-case basis, and the following outcomes are possible:

- Approved: The request is granted, and the absence is recorded as authorised.
- Denied: The absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and the parents will be informed that continued unauthorised absences could lead to a penalty notice or legal action.

Where a pupil fails to return on the agreed date following an authorised absence, or where an absence is taken without approval, the school may refer the case to the local authority for a Penalty Notice (fine) or further legal action.

Penalty Notices

Parents may be fined if:

- They take their child out of school for 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days) in a term.
- The child fails to return after the agreed period of authorised absence.

Appointments During School Time

Where possible, medical, dental, and other appointments should be arranged outside of school hours. If an appointment must occur during school time, the following procedure applies:

- Advance Notice: Parents must provide the school with advance notice of the appointment. This should be accompanied by an appointment card, hospital letter, or similar.
- Minimise Disruption: Parents should aim to ensure that their child attends school before and/or after the appointment, minimising the time spent away from school. Whole-day absences for appointments will generally not be authorised unless medically necessary.
- Collection Procedures: Children should only be collected for appointments by a known adult. The school may request identification from adults who are unfamiliar to the school.

Unauthorised Absence for Appointments

If a parent fails to inform the school of an appointment in advance or if an absence for an appointment exceeds what is considered reasonable, the absence may be marked as unauthorised. This can contribute to persistent absence, potentially triggering legal interventions.

Pupils leaving school during the school day

Pupils are not permitted to leave school unescorted during school hours for any reason. Pupils should only be collected from school by an appropriate known adult, ideally a parent or carer. Over the telephone parental consent allowing for a child to walk home alone during school hours is not permitted.

In the event that a pupil cannot be collected from school by an appropriate known adult or parent/carer, the school must make arrangements for the pupil to remain in school until the end of the school day. The care of the child must be handed over to an appropriate known adult, ideally a parent/carer, in the family home.

Children Absent from Education & Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Absent from Education: Refers to pupils who are temporarily absent from school due to illness, family circumstances, or other reasons, where their whereabouts are known and they are receiving appropriate education.

Children Missing Education (CME): Refers to children not receiving suitable education and not on a school roll, whose whereabouts are unknown. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The Children's Trust expects school staff to follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of pupils going missing in future.

In line with local authority guidelines, schools must:

- Report any pupil absent without explanation for 10 days to the local authority.
- In Birmingham, a referral should be made within 5 days for continuous absence where no contact has been made.
- Schools must work with local safeguarding partners to identify and support CME.

Further information is available in the DfE guidance Children Missing Education.

Deleting a Pupil from Roll

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and DfE guidance, a pupil can only be deleted from the school roll under specific circumstances:

- **Moving to another school:** When a pupil is registered at a new school and the school is informed in writing.
- **Elective Home Education (EHE):** When parents opt to home-educate their child and inform the school in writing. The school must notify the local authority.
- **Continuous Unauthorised Absence:** If a pupil has been absent for 20 consecutive days without explanation, and the school has made all reasonable enquiries, the pupil may be removed from roll with local authority approval.
- **Permanent Exclusion:** When a pupil has been permanently excluded and all appeal processes have been exhausted.

Before deleting a pupil from the roll, the school must:

1. Complete all reasonable checks to determine the pupil's whereabouts.
2. Report the case to the local authority and follow their guidance.
3. Ensure that a Children Missing Education (CME) referral is made if the child's whereabouts are unknown.

Vulnerable pupils

The school recognises that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to poor attendance than others, and the school is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. These groups of pupils should be carefully monitored, and intervention should be targeted where additional support is required.

Pupils with medical needs, special educational needs and/or disabilities, young carers, pupils with a social worker or in a receipt of the pupil premium are likely to require more targeted support than pupils outside of these groups. However, schools must never assume that because individual pupils do not belong to these groups that additional support will not be required, and colleagues must remain vigilant.

When a pupil with a social worker is absent without good reason, the social worker will be informed of unauthorised absences and support improved attendance. Where schools are considering the use of legal interventions, the view of the relevant social worker should be considered although the final decision will be taken by the school in liaison with the local authority school attendance service.

Appendix 1

St. Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School

"Through Jesus we achieve our very best"

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES – PUPIL TERM TIME LEAVE REQUEST (to be completed by parents/carers only)

Pupil's Name …… D.O.B …….. Class ……

Pupil's Name …… D.O.B …….. Class ……

Pupil's Name …… D.O.B …….. Class ……

I request permission for the above named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

Reason for request

……

……

Dates of absence

From …… To …… No of school days ……..

Address where we will be staying……

Email address……

Phone Number……..

I/We understand that if leave is agreed:

- if travelling abroad, I / we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
- I / we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.
- if I / we do not return at the agreed time; I / we am / are aware that I / we may be issued with a penalty notice. If I do not pay the fine, the case may be referred to Court which could result in a fine of up to £1000 per child and a criminal record.
- In exceptional circumstances penalty notices may not be issued and cases may be taken straight to Court.

Parent/Carer Name	**Parent/Carer Name**
……	……
DOB……	**DOB**……
Address……	**Address**……
……	……
Signature……	**Signature**……
Date……	**Date**……

Request **agreed / denied**

Signed …… Head Teacher