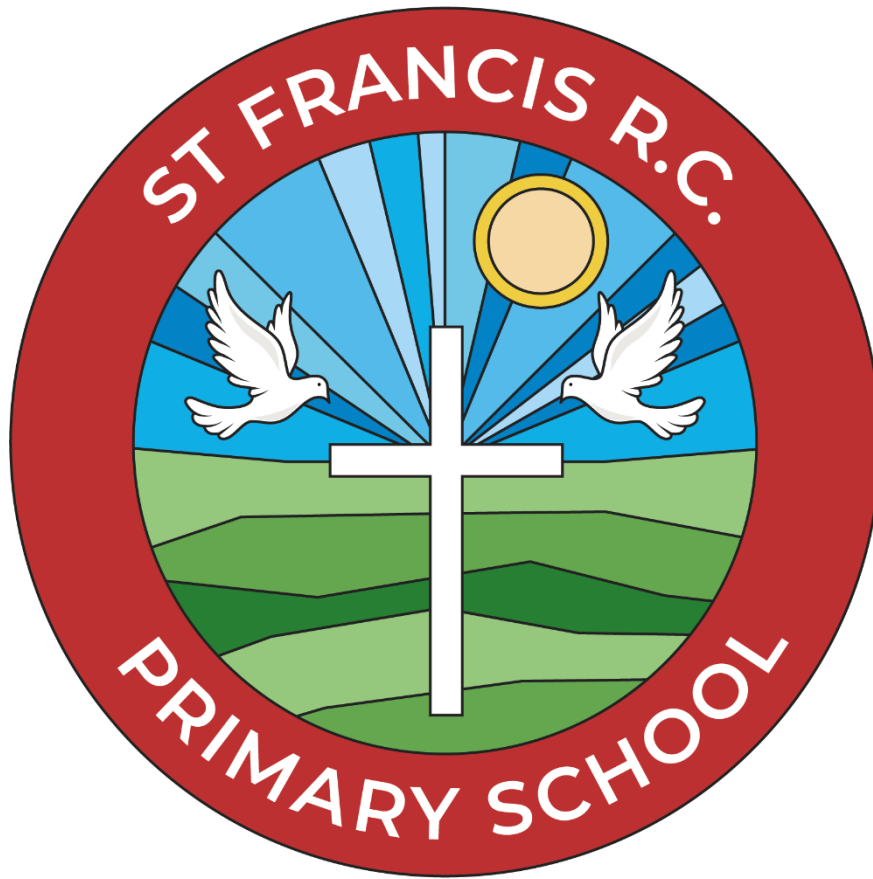




Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Mission Statement

We believe that with God, everything is in our reach.

Prepared by	Leah Deighan
Date of policy	September 2026
Date of Review	September 2027

Statement of Intent

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. St Francis RC Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning and struggle to develop socially. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Aim for all pupils to achieve attendance of 96% or above wherever possible, while recognising that individual circumstances, including health needs, may affect attendance.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education and development.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence may be authorised where the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the absence and that it meets the circumstances in which an absence can be authorised. Parents/carers should notify the school of the reason for any absence, but only the school can decide whether an absence is authorised. Not all absences supported by parents/carers will be authorised.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.

- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Manchester Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Attendance Officer (Leah Deighan).

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Attendance Officer where there are concerns and logging them on CPOMs.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences when children return to school.
- Discussing attendance issues at Parents' Evenings where necessary.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to Manchester Local Authority when school initiatives have not worked.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration Staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- Ensuring that the Attendance Officer is informed of the absence of any children on the watch list.
- Reporting concerns in attendance and punctuality to the Attendance Officer.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence before 9am.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter).
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

School doors open at 8.40am until 8.50am for children in Reception to Year 6. Nursery doors open at 8:30am.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Once they have submitted their register, the office staff take over responsibility of accurately coding absences. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9am. Children who arrive after the register has closed, but before 9:30am will receive a late mark (L). Children who arrive after 9:30am will receive an unauthorised absence for that session (U) which will affect their attendance percentage.

All attendance records are documented using Arbor software, which is supported by the Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust. Attendance registers are legal documents and must be kept secure and retained in accordance with the school and Trust's records retention requirements.

Punctuality/Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.50am all children must come into school via the school office and be signed in by an adult on the school inventory system. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives at school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.30am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. Core subjects (English, Reading and Mathematics) are taught in the morning.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school may, where appropriate, ask parents/carers to provide reasonable medical evidence to help us understand and support

their child's attendance. This could include an appointment card, medical letter, prescription or other appropriate evidence. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make its own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Headteachers are not permitted to approve holidays during term time. Leave of absence may only be granted if the Headteacher is satisfied that exceptional circumstances apply.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school aims for all pupils to achieve attendance of 96% or above wherever possible.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. We will always endeavour to work with families to support your child's attendance as much as possible. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the School Attendance Team.

Where appropriate, the school may request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice in accordance with the current Penalty Notice section of this policy and relevant national and local guidance.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Attendance Officer monitors attendance fortnightly. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). She works with families to improve attendance and may, where appropriate, request that the Local Authority considers a Penalty Notice or other appropriate intervention in accordance with current national and local guidance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on Arbor attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Attendance Officer to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Attendance & Holidays in Term Time

Every child should aim to achieve an overall attendance of 96% or above each academic year, wherever possible. Studies have shown that poor attendance is linked to poor attainment. At St Francis, we want all of our children to enjoy school and achieve their best, while recognising that individual circumstances may affect attendance.

- It is a parents' legal responsibility to ensure the regular full-time attendance of their children.

- Furthermore, if your child is absent for two or more days there may be occasions when school requires parents to provide proof of illness; this can be in the form of a doctor's letter, copy of prescription and/or medication, which clearly show the dates corresponding with the absence.
- Certain circumstances may result in a home visit, by our Attendance Officer who will, where possible, contact you prior to this to agree a convenient time.

Impact of Absence:

Pupil final attendance for the year	Equal to days absent	Approximately equal to weeks absent
95%	9 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
75%	48 days	10 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks

Medical Appointments

Where possible, please make medical appointments outside of school hours. However, we understand that at times this can be difficult; on these occasions, please provide school with a medical card or letter. A medical appointment DOES reduce your child's attendance percentage.

Please also be aware that we are not able to authorise siblings' absence from school when they do not have an appointment. These absences will be unauthorised.

Holidays in Term Time

Parents/carers should not book holidays during term time. Headteachers may only grant a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers who wish to request leave of absence during term time must complete an application with the school office before making any travel arrangements. Applications should be made at least six weeks before the intended absence.

Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request and the pupil's attendance record. Holidays taken during term time will not normally be authorised.

Where a pupil is absent from school for an unauthorised holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where the absence meets the national threshold for a Penalty Notice, the school may request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice in accordance with current national and local guidance.

Parents/carers should be aware that taking a holiday during term time can result in their child missing important learning and may have an impact on their attendance and progress.

For further information about attendance and Penalty Notices, please refer to the current guidance provided by Manchester City Council.

Penalty Notices

The school may request that Manchester City Council issues a Penalty Notice where a pupil's attendance meets the national threshold for a Penalty Notice and, following consideration of the individual circumstances, it is appropriate to do so.

The national threshold is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10-school-week period**. This can include any combination of unauthorised absence recorded using the relevant attendance codes, including:

- unauthorised holidays taken during term time;
- unauthorised absence where no satisfactory reason has been provided; and
- arriving late after the register has closed.

Where the threshold has been met, the school will consider whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate, taking into account the circumstances of the individual case, the support already offered and whether further support or another form of intervention would be more appropriate.

Where appropriate, a **Notice to Improve** may be used to provide parents/carers with a final opportunity to engage with support and improve their child's attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued.

A maximum of **two Penalty Notices may be issued to the same parent/carer in relation to the same pupil within a rolling three-year period**. A third or subsequent offence within this period will not result in a further Penalty Notice. Instead, the Local Authority will consider other appropriate legal interventions, which may include prosecution.

The cost of a Penalty Notice is:

- **First Penalty Notice:** £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days.
- **Second Penalty Notice within three years:** £160, payable within 28 days. There is no reduced rate for early payment.

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the required timescale may result in prosecution for the original offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Please see appendix 1 for more information.

Children Missing in Education

At St Francis RC Primary School, we recognise that all children of compulsory school age are entitled to receive a suitable, full-time education. Regular attendance is an important protective factor and helps ensure that children are able to access their education and that any safeguarding or welfare concerns are identified at the earliest opportunity.

Where a pupil is absent from school unexpectedly and the reason for the absence is unknown, the school will make prompt and appropriate enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and the reason for their absence. This will include contacting parents/carers and, where appropriate, making further reasonable enquiries.

Where there are concerns about a child's whereabouts, welfare or safety, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the police where appropriate.

If enquiries indicate that a child may no longer be attending the school and the parent/carer has not provided information confirming that the child is attending another school or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school, the school will work with the relevant Local Authority and follow the appropriate Children Missing Education (CME) procedures.

The school will continue to make reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and circumstances. Where appropriate, information will be shared securely with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies in accordance with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

A pupil's name will only be removed from the school admission register when one of the lawful grounds for removal has been met, in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current Department for Education guidance. Where required, reasonable enquiries will be undertaken jointly with the Local Authority before a pupil is removed from the admission register.

The school will follow Manchester City Council's current Children Missing from Education procedures and the Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Rewards

The school rewards all children for good attendance and punctuality. Each week, the class with the highest attendance receive an award in Celebration Assembly, and receive an extra playtime the following week.

Additionally, every week children who have 100% attendance and who are on time will be given a raffle ticket. Each half term a raffle will take place and the winner will receive an attendance bear to keep. This will ensure that children who are absent from school for genuine reasons still have the opportunity to be rewarded for good attendance.

Appendix 1



Statutory Action Escalation Pathway

1. Support First	2. Notice to Improve	3. First Action (£80)	4. Second Action (£160)	5. Final Action
Manchester adopts a 'support first' principle. All families should be offered good support to break down in-school and out-of-school barriers to attendance in line with Manchester's Graduated Approach.	<u>Sporadic Absence:</u> Issued for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a 10-week period. Families are offered up to 6-weeks to improve their attendance and engage with support. A family can move onto the next stage before 6-weeks if they do not engage with support or there is no clear sign of improvement. <u>Holidays</u> Not used for unauthorised holidays taken in term time	<u>Sporadic Absence:</u> Issued for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a 10-week period. <u>Holidays</u> Issued for a first unauthorised holiday taken in term time. PENALTY: £80 per pupil, per parent if paid within 21 days. £160 up to 28 days. If unpaid within 28 days, it will proceed to court	<u>Sporadic Absence:</u> Issued for a second period of 10 sessions missed over a 10-week period <i>within a 3-year rolling time frame</i> <u>Holidays</u> Issued for a second unauthorised holiday taken in term time over a 3-year period PENALTY: £160 per pupil, per parent. If unpaid within 28 days will proceed to court	A weekly panel will meet to decide appropriate next steps for pupils who reach this stage of the escalation pathway. Options include: PACE Face to Face PACE by Post Direct Prosecution Section1 Direct Prosecution Section 1a Formal Caution No Further Action Pupils coming into this stage of the pathway for further offences will be taken to multi-agency panels such as Early Help Allocations or Advice & Guidance (social care)

For more detail, please refer to Manchester's Code of Conduct for the issuing of Penalty Notices. For general school attendance enquiries please use the contact details below

0161 234 5255 schoolattendance@manchester.gov.uk

Three Year Rolling Period