



Xavier Catholic Education Trust

Attendance Policy

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Xavier Catholic Education Trust in Nov 2023 and will be reviewed in Oct 2024.

Committee Responsible: Audit and Risk Committee

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1. Aims

The Xavier Trust is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the schools policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

3.2 The Local Governing Committee

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Regularly reviewing and challenging school level attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.3 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (~~could be Headteacher~~)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is (Deputy Headteacher) and can be contacted via admin@stalbans.surrey.sch.uk or 020 8979 5893

3.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with Surrey CC Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs K Byrne and can be contacted via admin@stalbans.surrey.sch.uk or 020 8979 5893

3.6 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office in line with school process.

3.7 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Deputy Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.8 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence **before** 8.55am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school gate opens at 8.40am until 8.55am on each school day. The school strongly encourages children to be in class before 8.55am to be ready to learn.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm. Arrival after the register has closed will result in a U code.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.55am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

If your child is absent from school and the school have not been notified by 8.55am, the school will follow its 'First day calling procedures.' A copy of this procedure can be found in the school office.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

To request a leave of absence for your child, please complete the 'Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances' form (Appendix 3).

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

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 (Appendix 5)

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Parents can view their child's attendance on the Parent Portal and Arbor app.

- The attendance summary page will load a breakdown of the student's attendance for the current academic year.
- The Statistics Section will show both the number of sessions and the percentage the student has for each mark.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define '**exceptional circumstances**' as an event or problem which a parent or carer cannot control or did not expect.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least **2 weeks** before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form (Appendix 3). The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand 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.

7. Attendance monitoring

- 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.

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 95–100% | Good Attendance |
| 90–95% | School are monitoring attendance |
| Less than 90% | Attendance panel |

- If attendance is 90 –95%, the attendance lead will review the child's attendance history and, depending on the outcome, may wish to discuss the attendance with you as parents to see how we could support you in improving it.
- If attendance is <90% then the attendance will be reviewed by a panel of senior members of staff; the panel will wish to meet with parents to see how we, the school, can support improvements.
- If improvements do not follow the attendance panel review, then the case will be referred to the Inclusion officer with Surrey Local Authority.
- The Inclusion Officer can support families to improve attendance and can also seek hearing for prosecution.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- See Appendix 6 which contains the standard letter explaining concerns RE attendance & absences sent to parents.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by Xavier COO. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Trustee Board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Appendix 2: Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Appendix 3: Standard letter explaining concerns RE attendance & absences

Appendix 4: Standard letter explaining concerns RE lateness

Appendix 5: Standard letter requesting presence at a review meeting

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 |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | 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) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

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

Appendix 2: Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”.

Please request a leave of absence by completing the form on the reverse of this notification.

All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be referred to the Local Authority.

All leave of absence requests must be completed on the attached form. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

In considering the decision whether to authorise, the following will be considered:

- Your child’s previous attendance record; this includes attendance in the current academic year – which should be over 95% – as well as attendance in previous academic years.
- Whether your child will miss any tests/examinations (or important preparation for their tests)
- Whether your child is making good progress.
- The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Yours Sincerely

Deputy Headteacher
St. Alban's Catholic Primary School
Beauchamp Road
East Molesey
Surrey KT8 2PG

For Parent to complete

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Pupil Name | | Class | |
| Date of first day of absence (am or pm) | | Date of return to school (am or pm) | |
| Number of school days that your child will be absent from school | | | |
| Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence: | | | |
| I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised, the local authority may be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. | | | |
| Forename of Parent/carer(s) making application | | Surname of Parent/carer(s) making application | |
| Signed | | Dated | |

For School to complete

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Authorised | | Unauthorised | |
| Your child's attendance is currently: | | | |

Please note: An unauthorised absence may be reported to the Local authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Signed:

Head Teacher:

Date:

Appendix 4: Standard letter explaining concerns RE attendance & absences

Private & Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

In accordance with our attendance policy, we recently held a review of attendance across the school.

During the analysis of data, we found that 'PUPIL NAME's attendance is currently ??%.

As stated within the school's attendance policy, children will have their attendance monitored in school should it fall below 95%. Of this absence ??% is 'authorised' and ??% is 'unauthorised'

We, as a school, are strictly monitored on procedures related to attendance and punctuality of children and are required, by law, to ensure that we provide appropriate support.

If you require any support with your child's attendance, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Headteacher
St. Alban's Catholic Primary School
Beauchamp Road
East Molesey
Surrey KT8 2PG

Phone: 020 8979 5893

Appendix 5: Standard letter explaining concerns RE lateness

Private & Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

In accordance with our attendance policy, we recently held a review of attendance across the school.

During the analysis of data, we found that 'PUPIL NAME's attendance is currently ??% and that they have been ?? minutes late since the start of the academic year.

We, as a school, are strictly monitored on procedures related to attendance and punctuality of children and are required, by law, to ensure that we provide appropriate support.

If you require any support with your child's attendance, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Headteacher
St. Alban's Catholic Primary School
Beauchamp Road
East Molesey
Surrey KT8 2PG

Phone: 020 8979 5893

Appendix 6: Standard letter requesting presence at a review meeting

Private & Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

In accordance with our attendance policy, we recently held a review of attendance across the school.

During the analysis of data, we found that '**PUPIL NAME**'s attendance is currently **??%**.

We would like to invite you to attend a meeting in school with regards to the attendance record so we can discuss how we can work together to support and improve **NAME**'s attendance.

Please can you attend a meeting at St. Alban's Catholic Primary School on **DAY, DATE, YEAR** at **TIME**.

If you are not available to meet at this time, please contact the school office to rearrange.

The meeting will be chaired by the Executive Headteacher and/or the (Deputy Headteacher).

Yours sincerely

St. Alban's Catholic Primary School
Beauchamp Road
East Molesey
Surrey KT8 2PG

Phone: 020 8979 5893