St. Gerard's Catholic Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Our Mission Statement

'With Christ at our side and St. Gerard as our guide we live, love learn and pray together'

5 Foundations Of Effective Attendance Practice

Foundation 1
Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate

Foundation 2
Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes

Foundation 3
Professional Learning Staff Development

Foundation 4
Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention

Foundation 5
Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management

Reviewed: September 2026
Next review: September 2027

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff of Saint Gerard's Catholic School acknowledge that there is a strong link between high attendance and high attainment. Good attendance is crucial in order that a child achieves their full potential at school and accesses all that our school can offer to them.

We aim to:

- safeguard pupils and ensure they receive their entitlement to education
- improve and maintain levels of attendance consistent with established targets
- ensure there is common and consistent practice amongst staff
- raise parent and pupil awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and of the impact attendance has on achievement
- have a system of incentives and rewards which encourage individual pupils and whole classes to attend regularly

Attendance as a Safeguarding Matter

Regular school attendance is an important protective factor for children and young people. The school recognises that attendance is not solely an educational issue and that absence, particularly unexplained, prolonged or irregular absence, may be an indicator that a child is experiencing safeguarding concerns or is at risk of harm.
Changes in a pupil's attendance or punctuality will therefore be considered alongside other information known to the school. Staff will remain alert to possible links between attendance and neglect, abuse, domestic abuse, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, serious violence, mental health and emotional wellbeing difficulties, SEND and other vulnerabilities.
Where attendance patterns or absence give rise to safeguarding concerns, these must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay. The school will follow the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and will share information with other agencies where this is necessary to safeguard a child.
Attendance information will be considered alongside pastoral, safeguarding, SEND and other relevant information to ensure that the school has a complete understanding of any barriers affecting a pupil's attendance.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. The school recognises that barriers to attendance can be complex and will work with pupils and families to understand and address them. Attendance is everyone's responsibility.

We believe that helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is a collective responsibility between parents, pupils and all members of our school staff and governors.

Parents [Carers] have a responsibility to:

- ensure that their child regularly attends school and that they are only absent when their child is unwell and therefore unfit to learn, or is having a day of religious observance
- ensure they are in school punctually as lateness impacts on their child and the whole of their year group
- promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child comes to school ready to learn and with the correct equipment to participate in all lessons

The school has a responsibility to:

- ensure there is a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance
- ensure there is a clear line of responsibility and a clear system for the promotion and monitoring of attendance
- monitor and evaluate attendance and identify children whose attendance causes concern.

- keep parents informed of their child's attendance level and contact parents should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance
- offer support to any family who is experiencing a period of difficulty, engaging external agencies if appropriate
- report to parents on their child's attendance at parents evening and through the annual school report
- celebrate good attendance by announcing class attendance winners in Monday morning assembly and displaying attendance winners on the attendance board. Promoting good individual and class attendance by awarding certificates at the end of each term.

The Governing Body has a responsibility to:

- ensure that the school and staff meet legal responsibilities in relation to all pupil attendance and registration regulations
- ensure that the school is able to provide the necessary resources for the implementation of this policy
- monitor attendance via the figures published in the Head Teacher report to Governors.

A St Gerard's, we believe it is **everyone's** responsibility, not only to monitor attendance but to encourage it also.

Understanding types of absence:

Every absence must be recorded using the appropriate statutory attendance code. The school, not the parent/carer, determines whether an absence can be authorised, based on the circumstances and the applicable regulations and statutory guidance. Parents/carers must provide a reason for every absence; providing a reason does not automatically mean that the absence will be authorised.

An absence may be authorised where the reason meets the statutory requirements, for example illness, an unavoidable medical appointment, or a day of religious observance. The school will consider each case individually and record the appropriate attendance code in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE guidance.

Unauthorised absence is recorded where the reason does not meet the requirements for authorised absence, or where no satisfactory reason has been provided. This may include unauthorised leave in term time and unexplained absence. Where appropriate, the school may refer cases to Birmingham City Council's Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) and/or pursue statutory attendance interventions in line with current guidance. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- pupils who arrive after the register has closed and are recorded using the appropriate statutory code
- absences which have never been properly explained
- holidays in term time which will always be unauthorised

Arrival

The gates open at 8:40am. Pupils should arrive in good time to be in class and ready to learn by 8:50am. The gates close at 8:50am.

Registration

The morning attendance register is taken at 8:50am and the afternoon register is taken at the start of the afternoon session at 1.05p.m. Register closes at 1.15p.m. Each school day comprises two sessions for attendance purposes. Registers must be completed accurately and promptly, and any unexplained absence followed up.
After the gates close at 8:50am, pupils must enter through the main entrance and be signed in by their parent/carer or accompanying responsible adult. A pupil arriving after the 8:50am register has been taken but before 9:20am will normally receive a late mark (code L). The morning register closes at 9:20am. A pupil arriving

after 9:20am will normally be recorded with code U (arrived in school after the register closed), which records the morning session as an unauthorised absence, unless the circumstances require a different statutory code. Staff will record the actual arrival and follow the school's safeguarding and registration procedures.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher receiving vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Managing lateness:

The school monitors punctuality and will contact parents/carers where lateness becomes a pattern. The school will discuss the reasons for lateness, offer support where barriers are identified and agree clear expectations and actions. Persistent lateness, including arrival after the register has closed, may lead to an attendance meeting and further action in line with the school's attendance procedures and statutory guidance.

Afternoon Registration

The school operates a single afternoon registration. The afternoon register is completed when pupils return to class following their lunch break and is taken no later than 1:10pm. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that the register is completed accurately and promptly, recording pupils' presence and any absence using the appropriate attendance codes in accordance with statutory guidance. Any unexplained absence identified during registration will be followed up in line with the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Absence within the school day:

Any child leaving school with a parent within school hours are required to sign out on the electronic system and the reason noted. The signing out system is used in the case of fire as an appendix to the class register.

Illness - The school office should be informed before 9.30am on the first day of a child's absence through illness with a proposed date of return to school. During busy periods in the office the answering machine is left on – all messages are always picked up, so parents should feel free to leave a voice message. If there is no contact from the parent, a member of our office team will contact parents on the first day of absence.
Parents/carers must notify the school office of a child's absence on the first day, giving the reason and expected date of return, and keep the school updated if the absence continues. If no reason is received, the school will make contact promptly to establish the reason. Unexplained absence will be followed up and may trigger safeguarding checks where appropriate. The school will make proportionate enquiries and record the outcome.

Medical Appointments - Every effort should be made **to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.** If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child is expected to be brought to school for their registration mark and then returned to school directly after the appointment.

Absence in term time - There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time. All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Holidays in term time – no holidays in term time can be authorised.

Parents needing exceptional circumstances to be considered for absences should make an appointment to discuss this with the Head Teacher well in advance. In all cases a Leave in Term Time Form must be completed, these are available from the school office or on the school website.

Arrangements for absence in other circumstances

Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances:

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be recorded on the register.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with the family to understand the root problem and engage the support of other external agencies as appropriate.

Unexplained and or persistent absences [PA]:

Missing 10% of possible sessions across the school year is classed as persistent absence. This can represent a significant loss of learning and wider school experiences. The school uses attendance data to identify concerns early and will not wait until a pupil reaches the persistent absence threshold before offering support or taking appropriate action.

Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is identified as a Persistent Absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions across the school year, regardless of the reason for absence. The school will not wait until a pupil reaches the PA threshold before taking action. Attendance will be monitored regularly so that emerging patterns of absence can be identified and appropriate support offered at an early stage.

Where a pupil is at risk of becoming persistently absent, the school will work with the pupil and their parents/carers to understand the barriers to attendance and agree appropriate support. This may include pastoral support, attendance plans, support from the school nurse or other professionals, SEND support, support for emotional wellbeing or referrals to external agencies.

Severe absence refers to pupils who miss 50% or more of their possible sessions. Where a pupil is severely absent, the school will provide an enhanced level of support and will consider the wider safeguarding and welfare implications of the absence. The school will work with the family and relevant external agencies to identify and address the underlying barriers to attendance.

Persistent or severe absence will be considered alongside attainment, SEND, safeguarding, pastoral and family information to ensure that the school's response is appropriate to the individual needs of the pupil.

Strategies to Reduce Persistent and Severe Absence

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School adopts a **trauma-informed, relational and supportive approach** to improving attendance. The school recognises that absence may be linked to a range of underlying factors, including anxiety, emotional wellbeing, bereavement, unmet special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), medical needs and difficulties within the family. Staff seek to understand the reasons behind absence and work collaboratively with pupils and their parents/carers to identify and remove barriers to regular school attendance. A range of targeted strategies is used to support pupils at risk of, or experiencing, persistent or severe absence. These include:

- **Early identification and intervention:** Attendance data is reviewed regularly to identify pupils whose attendance is declining, enabling the school to intervene before absence becomes entrenched. Support is proportionate to the level of concern and the individual circumstances of the pupil.
- **Trauma-informed practice:** Staff consider the impact of adverse experiences, anxiety and emotional distress on a pupil's ability to attend school. Relationships, emotional safety, consistency and trusted adults are used to help pupils feel safe, understood and ready to return to learning.
- **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA):** Where anxiety or emotional distress is contributing to absence, the school uses EBSA-informed strategies to understand the pupil's experience, work with families and develop an individualised, supportive plan for reintegration. This may include identifying triggers, establishing trusted relationships, using appropriate transition arrangements and implementing a gradual return to school where necessary and appropriate.

- **Mental health and emotional wellbeing support:** The school works with Compass mental health support services where appropriate to help identify and address barriers linked to pupils' emotional wellbeing. Staff trained in Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) approaches provide targeted emotional support to help pupils develop emotional awareness, resilience and strategies for managing difficult feelings.
- **Bereavement support:** Recognising that bereavement and loss can affect a pupil's emotional wellbeing and ability to attend school, staff use their bereavement training to respond sensitively, provide appropriate support and work with families to help pupils feel secure and supported.
- **Pastoral and SEND support:** Where appropriate, the school coordinates support with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), pastoral staff and external professionals to ensure that reasonable adjustments and appropriate provision are considered. Support is tailored to the pupil's individual needs and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership with parents and carers:** The school maintains regular communication with families to understand barriers to attendance, agree practical next steps and review progress. Conversations are supportive and solution-focused, while making clear the importance of regular school attendance.
- **Multi-agency working:** Where barriers cannot be addressed by the school and family alone, the school works with relevant services, including health professionals, mental health services, Early Help/Family Help and the local authority, as appropriate. For pupils experiencing severe absence, the school considers whether a coordinated multi-agency response is needed to safeguard the pupil's welfare and support their return to education.
- **Reintegration and ongoing monitoring:** Following a period of absence, the school works with the pupil and family to support a successful return, identifying any adjustments or pastoral support needed. Attendance is monitored closely to evaluate the impact of interventions, adapt support where necessary and recognise improvements.

The impact of interventions is reviewed regularly by the school's attendance lead and relevant staff. Where attendance does not improve, or concerns escalate, the school will reassess the barriers, consider additional support and follow the appropriate local authority attendance procedures. The school recognises that supportive intervention and statutory action are not mutually exclusive; where appropriate, formal attendance processes will be pursued alongside efforts to understand and address the underlying causes of absence. The ultimate aim is to improve attendance sustainably, protect pupils' wellbeing and ensure that every child can access their education and achieve their full potential.

Support First approach

Absence is considered on its individual circumstances and coded in accordance with statutory guidance. The school may ask parents/carers for further information or evidence where this is reasonable and proportionate, particularly where absence is frequent or a pattern of concern has emerged. Persistent absence does not, by itself, mean that an absence must be unauthorised.

As a school we readily accept any initiative which will support and enhance the strategies we have in place in order that we achieve the best possible levels of attendance for the children in our care. We actively encourage parents to contact us when they are experiencing difficulties so that these can be quickly resolved.

Attendance support and intervention

The school follows a Support First approach: early, respectful communication with families; a clear understanding of the reasons for absence; and timely, proportionate support. Support will be tailored to the pupil and family and may include an attendance discussion, an agreed attendance plan, pastoral or SEND support, help with anxiety or emotionally based school avoidance, a school nurse or other professional, or a referral to Family Help/other services where appropriate.

Attendance is reviewed regularly using accurate school data. The school considers overall attendance, persistent and severe absence, repeated short absences, lateness, changes in patterns, the reasons recorded for absence and the impact on learning. Where helpful, leaders will consider attendance alongside attainment and progress, including end-of-EYFS and end-of-KS1 outcomes, to identify pupils who may need earlier support.

Where support is unsuccessful, is not engaged with, or is not appropriate, the school will consider further formal steps in line with statutory guidance. These may include a formal attendance meeting, an attendance contract or referral to the local authority for consideration of legal intervention. Any decision will be based on the circumstances of the case and the relevant statutory requirements; legal action is not automatic.

For pupils with medical conditions, SEND, mental health needs, anxiety or other vulnerabilities, the school will work with the family and relevant professionals to consider reasonable adjustments and appropriate support. Attendance concerns may also raise safeguarding concerns; staff must report these promptly to the DSL and follow safeguarding procedures.

Attendance and Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that some pupils may require a more immediate and individualised response to absence because of their circumstances or known vulnerabilities. This may include children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan, children who are looked after or previously looked after, children known to Children's Social Care, children with significant SEND or medical needs, or children where there are existing safeguarding concerns.

For pupils where there are known safeguarding or welfare concerns, the school will consider the circumstances of each absence individually and may undertake a same-day welfare check where appropriate. Safeguarding action will not be delayed until a pupil reaches a particular number of days or sessions absent.

Where the school is unable to establish the reason for a pupil's absence, or where there are concerns about the child's safety or whereabouts, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and may contact parents/carers, undertake a home visit, contact other professionals or request a police safe and well check where appropriate.

Using Attendance Data to Target Improvement

The school regularly monitors and analyses attendance data to identify patterns, emerging concerns and pupils who may require additional support to improve their attendance. Data is reviewed at whole-school, year-group, class and individual pupil level, including persistent and severe absence, lateness and patterns of absence across particular days or periods. Attendance information is used to identify groups of pupils who may be disproportionately affected by barriers to attendance, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Where concerns are identified, the school takes a proactive, supportive and proportionate approach, following Birmingham City Council's Support First procedures. This may include early conversations with parents and carers, attendance meetings, individualised support plans, referrals to relevant services and, where appropriate, escalation through the local authority's attendance procedures. Attendance data is reviewed regularly to evaluate the impact of interventions, celebrate improvements and ensure that support is targeted effectively. The school uses this information to inform its attendance action plan, set ambitious improvement targets and ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve the best possible attendance and access the full curriculum.

National Framework for Penalty Notices for School Absence

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School follows the National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, and Birmingham City Council's Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and **Support First** procedures.

Penalty notices are issued by Birmingham City Council, not the school, and may be used as an alternative to prosecution where a parent has failed to secure their child's regular school attendance. The school will follow Birmingham City Council's procedures when considering whether to refer a case for legal intervention.

Under the National Framework, the national threshold is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. A session is either a morning or an afternoon registration. The threshold

may be met through a continuous period of absence or separate occasions of unauthorised absence within the 10-week period. Schools and local authorities must consider each case individually and follow the applicable local procedures; reaching the threshold does not mean that a penalty notice will automatically be issued.

In line with Birmingham City Council's Support First approach, the school will normally seek to understand the barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support before progressing to legal intervention. Where the threshold has been met, support has been offered and a parent has not engaged with that support, or the support has not improved attendance, a **Notice to Improve** may be issued as a final opportunity to improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered. A Notice to Improve is not appropriate in every case, and the school will follow Birmingham City Council's guidance when deciding the appropriate course of action.

The national framework sets the following penalty notice amounts for each parent liable for the offence in respect of an individual child:

- **First penalty notice:** £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days.
- **Second penalty notice:** £160, payable within 28 days, with no discounted rate.
- **Further offences:** A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the date of the first notice. Where the threshold is met again, the local authority will consider alternative legal action, which may include prosecution.

Penalty notices may also be considered where a child takes unauthorised leave of absence during term time. These cases are dealt with through Birmingham City Council's separate Leave of Absence (Legal) Process and do not require a Notice to Improve. The school will not authorise term-time holidays unless the circumstances meet the statutory requirements for an authorised leave of absence.

The school will maintain accurate attendance records, communicate concerns to parents and carers, document support offered and follow Birmingham City Council's referral procedures. Decisions about legal intervention will take account of the circumstances of the individual case, the reasons for absence and the relevant statutory requirements. Support to improve attendance will remain central to the school's approach.

- https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50157/education_legal_intervention_referral/690/school_attendance_advice_for_schools_and_professionals/

Notice to Improve (NTI), Penalty Notices (PNs) and Other Legal Intervention

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School follows the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, the National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence and Birmingham City Council's Support First procedures. The school adopts a graduated approach, prioritising early identification, supportive intervention and partnership working with parents and carers to address barriers to regular attendance. However, where attendance does not improve, unauthorised absence continues or concerns are sufficiently serious, the school will consider referral to Birmingham City Council for further intervention.

Notice to Improve (NTI)

Where a pupil's attendance meets the national threshold for considering a penalty notice, and a penalty notice may be appropriate, the school and local authority will consider whether a Notice to Improve should be issued in accordance with the national framework and Birmingham City Council's procedures. A Notice to Improve provides parents with a final opportunity to improve their child's attendance within a specified period. It will identify the attendance concerns, the improvements required and the consequences of continued unauthorised absence. The school will monitor attendance during the specified period and maintain records of communication, support offered and attendance outcomes.

Penalty Notices (PNs)

A referral for a penalty notice may be considered where the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks has been met and the circumstances meet the applicable national and local criteria. The threshold does not automatically result in a penalty notice. Decisions will be made in accordance with Birmingham City Council's Code of Conduct and referral procedures. Penalty notices may also be considered for unauthorised leave of absence during term time, subject to the applicable legal requirements. The school will provide the local authority with the necessary attendance records and supporting evidence when making a referral. Penalty notices are issued by the local authority, not the school.

Other Legal Intervention

Where attendance fails to improve despite appropriate support, parents do not engage with interventions, or the circumstances warrant more immediate action, the school may refer the case to Birmingham City Council for consideration of further legal intervention. Depending on the circumstances, this may include prosecution for failure to ensure regular school attendance or other appropriate action under the relevant legislation. A Notice to Improve is not required in every case, and the school will follow the applicable national framework and local authority procedures when determining the appropriate course of action.

Safeguarding and Individual Circumstances

All decisions will take account of the pupil's individual circumstances, including safeguarding concerns, SEND, medical needs, emotional wellbeing, bereavement, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) and any other barriers affecting attendance. Where appropriate, the school will continue to work with parents, Birmingham City Council and relevant professionals to identify and address these barriers. Supportive intervention and legal action are not mutually exclusive; formal processes may be pursued alongside support where necessary to secure regular attendance and protect the pupil's welfare.

The school will maintain accurate records of attendance, communication, interventions and decisions to ensure that referrals are evidence-based, proportionate and consistent with statutory guidance and Birmingham City Council's Support First procedures.

Attendance Targets

Our whole-school aspirational attendance target is 98%. We monitor attendance at whole-school, class and individual-pupil level, including patterns by year group and relevant pupil groups. We celebrate improved and strong attendance while ensuring that rewards do not disadvantage pupils whose attendance is affected by illness, disability or other circumstances beyond their control.

Responsibilities

We recognise that it is the responsibility of our whole school based team to promote attendance and punctuality but within this role, there are key duties:

- Teachers must complete the online attendance register accurately and promptly at 8:50am and at the start of the afternoon session at 1.05p.m. The morning register closes at 9:20am. Any amendments must be made in accordance with the school's procedures, with an auditable reason recorded where required.

The school will maintain the admission and attendance registers in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the current Department for Education statutory guidance, Working together to improve school attendance (updated 9 July 2026).

- All adults must report any concerns about a child to the Headteacher [or Deputy in their absence], if they are made aware that their absence may be a safeguarding issue – a safe and well check can then be made.
- The Headteacher, with the support of the administration team will monitor attendance and lates.
- J Wilson is the attendance lead- jwilson@stgerard.bham.sch.uk, however the Headteacher, office staff and all teaching staff all have a role to play in supporting good attendance. They can be contacted on 0121 4642613 or enquiry@stgerard.bham.sch.uk

Recognition of good attendance

We have a number reward systems in place to encourage high attendance:

- A class league system where classes earn points depending on their percentage that week. We aim this encourages children who always have great attendance to not be disheartened.
- Certificates are given for all children who receive 100% attendance.

- Any child who achieves 100% for an academic year receives a special badge and certificate and a reward from the school.
- One class will also win the overall attendance for the year – often a special award.
- Rewards for attendance above 98%- raffles, prizes.
- Bi-Weekly attendance token initiative which then can be used to buy treats from the St Gerard's shop half termly- this means that all children can achieve good attendance short term, with a long-term aspiration in mind.

Communicating the Attendance Policy to Parents and Carers

At the beginning of each academic year, all parents and carers are reminded of the school's Attendance Policy, including the importance of regular and punctual attendance, the procedures for reporting absence, the school's expectations and the potential consequences of unauthorised absence. The policy is made available to parents and carers via the school website, and key information is communicated through appropriate school communications. Parents and carers are reminded of their legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at school. The school promotes a shared understanding that good attendance is essential to pupils' academic progress, wellbeing and wider development.

Summary

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy was reviewed in September 2026 and will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance or circumstances change. The policy will be available to staff and parents/carers and published on the school website.

National legislation and statutory guidance

- **Department for Education (DfE) – Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026).** Statutory guidance setting out the responsibilities of schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities in promoting regular attendance and addressing absence.
- **Education Act 1996.** Establishes parents' legal responsibility to ensure their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education, including through regular school attendance.
- **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.** Sets out requirements for admission and attendance registers, including the recording of attendance and absence.
- **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended.** Provides the legal framework for issuing penalty notices for school absence.
- **Children Act 1989.** Provides the legal framework for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- **Children Act 2004.** Establishes duties relating to cooperation between agencies to improve children's wellbeing and safeguard them.
- **Equality Act 2010.** Requires schools to consider their duties towards disabled pupils and make reasonable adjustments where required.
- **Children and Families Act 2014.** Includes duties relating to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Department for Education – Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).** Statutory safeguarding guidance relevant to identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns associated with absence from school.
- **Department for Education – Children Missing Education.** Guidance on identifying children who are not receiving a suitable education and the responsibilities of schools and local authorities.
- **Department for Education – Arranging Education for Children Who Cannot Attend School Because of Health Needs.** Guidance relevant to pupils whose health needs prevent them from attending school.
- **Department for Education – Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.** Guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions to access education.

Birmingham City Council guidance and procedures

- **Birmingham School Attendance Strategy 2026–2029.** Sets out the local authority's priorities and approach to improving school attendance.
- **Birmingham City Council – Support First School Attendance Framework and Guidance.** Sets out the local approach to identifying barriers, supporting families and escalating attendance concerns where necessary.
- **Birmingham City Council – Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (September 2024), or the latest version.** Sets out the local arrangements for considering and issuing penalty notices.
- **Birmingham City Council – Education Prosecution Policy (2024), or the latest version.** Explains the local authority's approach to legal intervention relating to school attendance.
- **Birmingham City Council – Leave of Absence (Legal) Process and associated guidance.** Sets out procedures for dealing with unauthorised leave of absence during term time.
- **Birmingham City Council – Attendance Procedures for Schools.** Provides local procedures, forms and guidance for managing attendance concerns and referrals.
- **Birmingham City Council – Guidance on Attendance and Absence Codes.** Supports accurate recording of attendance and absence in school registers.



https://lscpbirmingham.org.uk/refreshed-right-help-right-time-guidance-now-live

Glossary of Key Terms and Acronyms

Term / Acronym	Definition
Attendance	The recording of a pupil's presence at school during the required morning and afternoon registration sessions.
Authorised Absence	An absence that the school has accepted as legitimate under the relevant regulations and guidance, such as certain illnesses or an authorised leave of absence.
Unauthorised Absence	An absence that the school has not authorised because the reason provided does not meet the requirements for authorisation or no satisfactory explanation has been provided.
Persistent Absentee (PA)	A pupil who misses 10% or more of their possible school sessions over the relevant period, normally assessed across the school year.
Severe Absence (SA)	A pupil who misses 50% or more of their possible school sessions.
Possible Sessions	The total number of morning and afternoon registration sessions a pupil could attend during a specified period.
Attendance Code	A statutory code used in the school register to record a pupil's attendance, absence or other relevant circumstances.
Punctuality	Arriving at school on time and being present for registration and the start of learning.
Late Arrival	Arriving after the expected start of the school day. The appropriate register code depends on the time of arrival and the circumstances.
Persistent Lateness	A repeated pattern of arriving late to school, which can reduce learning time and may require targeted intervention.
Support First	Birmingham City Council's approach to school attendance, which prioritises understanding barriers, providing support and working with families before escalating to formal intervention where appropriate.
Notice to Improve	A formal notice giving a parent an opportunity to improve their child's attendance before a penalty notice is considered, where applicable under the national framework and local procedures.
Penalty Notice	A financial penalty that may be issued to a parent for specified offences relating to school absence, in accordance with legislation and the local authority's code of conduct.
Leave of Absence	Permission requested from the school for a pupil to be absent during term time. It may only be authorised where the statutory criteria are met.
DfE	Department for Education: the government department responsible for education policy and statutory guidance in England.
LA	Local Authority. For St Gerard's Catholic Primary School, this is Birmingham City Council.
EBSA	Emotionally Based School Avoidance. Difficulties attending school associated with emotional distress, anxiety or other emotional needs.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator: the member of staff responsible for coordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs.

ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. A trained member of staff who provides structured emotional support to pupils.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead: the person responsible for leading safeguarding arrangements in school.
Early Help / Family Help	Support provided to children and families at an early stage to address emerging needs and prevent difficulties from escalating.
Multi-agency Working	Professionals from different services working together with a child and family to identify needs, coordinate support and improve outcomes.
Reintegration Plan	An agreed plan to support a pupil's return to school following a period of absence, taking account of their individual needs and any barriers to attendance.
Attendance Support Plan	A targeted plan agreed with the pupil and their parents/carers, setting out actions, responsibilities and review arrangements to improve attendance.
Trauma-informed Practice	An approach that recognises how difficult or traumatic experiences may affect a pupil's emotional wellbeing, behaviour and ability to attend school.
Reasonable Adjustments	Changes to arrangements, policies or provision that a school may be legally required to make to avoid substantial disadvantage for disabled pupils.
Alternative Provision (AP)	Education arranged outside the usual school setting in circumstances where a pupil requires a different or additional educational arrangement.
CME	Children Missing Education: children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school, as defined in the relevant guidance.
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education: statutory guidance from the Department for Education setting out safeguarding responsibilities in schools and colleges.
Working Together to Improve School Attendance	Department for Education statutory guidance setting out the responsibilities of schools, parents and local authorities for improving attendance.
Attendance Monitoring	The regular analysis of attendance information to identify patterns, concerns and pupils who may need additional support.
Attendance Intervention	An action taken to address barriers to attendance, ranging from early conversations with families to targeted support and formal legal intervention where appropriate.
Authorised Leave	A period of absence formally agreed by the school where the legal requirements for authorisation are met.
Safeguarding	Protecting children from harm, preventing impairment of their health or development, and ensuring they receive safe and effective care.