



*Growing as we learn. Learning as we grow.
Rooted in Jesus.*

ST MARGARET'S COLLIER STREET CE SCHOOL

**ATTENDANCE
POLICY**

Review:	September 2023
Agreed by Governors:	September 2023
Next Review:	September 2025

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance	6
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	8
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	9
7. Attendance monitoring	9
8. Monitoring arrangements	10
9. Links with other policies	10
Appendix 1: attendance codes	10

1.Aims

St. Margaret’s Collier Street is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them as well as remain safe. This policy represents our commitment to expect 100% attendance from all our pupils, which is achieved by many children. It sets out our expectations and the strategies that the school will undertake to achieve this.

We are 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 taking into account individual needs.

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.](#)

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 KCC

All pupils

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services
- Have a School Attendance Support Team (PIAS) that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

- Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so
- Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance
- If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

- Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:
- Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils

- Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:
- All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision
- Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

- Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

- Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families
- Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for pupils with a social worker (VSK – Virtual School Kent)

- Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area
- Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children
- Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.

3.2 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging 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 In addition the Headteacher as the designated leader responsible for attendance 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.

Please either phone or e-mail: office@collier-street.kent.sch.uk

3.5. Schools

All pupils

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

- Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:
- Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Severely absent pupils

- Continued support as for persistently pupils and:
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of low attendance and develop strategies to support them
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

Support for pupils with a social worker

- Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

3.6. Parents and Carers

All pupils

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm. The school day ends at 3.15pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to 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. Leave of absence should be requested by sending an e-mail to office@collier-street.kent.sch.uk

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.

Pupils can come on site from 8.45am and should be in the classroom by 8.55am. Early morning work is set and so it is critical that children are on time. Children who arrive after 8.55am should report to the office. Persistent lateness will be followed up by a meeting with the parents.

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 e.g. at Parent/Teacher consultations as well as the final written report of the year.

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.

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 1 week** before the absence, sending an e-mail to the school office clearly stating the dates and reason for a request. 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 – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. 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.

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
- Where support has not been successful or parents have not engaged with it.

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

St.Margaret's Collier Street will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the sharing to the whole school of attendance data each week, newsletters, class awards each term and recognition for great attendance in end of term church services. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and children.

We will also:

- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued.
- Encourage our children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.

7. Attendance monitoring

Monitoring will take place each week by the Headteacher who receives attendance data for each class as well as children whose attendance is less than 90%. The individual pupil records will be compared with the previous data to see if there is an improvement or the situation is deteriorating. The Headteacher can also identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.1 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts including FSM, SEN, PP and EAL 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.

7.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide attendance reports to class teachers in preparation for parent/teacher consultations
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.3 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. Letters will be issued detailing the meeting and agreed actions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance. The school will engage with the LA when individual attendance is not improving. E.g. Early Help.

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. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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