

**St Mary's Vision & Values statement**

**'Love one another, as I have loved you.'** John 13:34

**As Jesus taught us, we strive to love each other as an inclusive, Catholic community embracing all faiths, cultures and beliefs.**

**We support one another to achieve our goals; to persevere and value learning while discovering the gifts God has given to us.**

**We help each other use our God-given talents to serve God, each other, our community and the world, following Jesus' example.**



**Date of Policy: October 2025 Approved by: HT/CoG Date of next review: Autumn 2026**

### 1. Aims & Objectives

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to meet their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure regular attendance is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

At St Mary's we believe that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

97%+ - An excellent level of attendance. This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

95%-97% - A good level of attendance but there is scope to make it better.

90-95% - Absence might now be affecting attainment and progress at school.

Below 90% - **Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN.** It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. The school will work with you and the Local Authority to improve your child's attendance.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can authorise absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

At St Mary's Primary we aim to have a whole school attendance rate of a minimum of 97%.

## **2. Legislation & 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

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

## **3. Roles & Responsibilities**

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Email the school to report their child's absence before 09:15 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return (via [admin@st-marys-churchdown.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-marys-churchdown.gloucs.sch.uk) )
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

**The governing board** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

**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
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

**The Senior Attendance Champion** (*Headteacher: Mr Liam Jordan*) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

**The school attendance officer and Attendance administrator** (*Headteacher: Mr Liam Jordan. Attendance administrator: Mrs Mary Cullimore*) are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 school staff e.g. pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (*or other member of staff authorised by the headteacher*) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The class teacher/form tutor** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information via the electronic registration system.

**School administration/office staff** are responsible for:

- Accessing emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Share information from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance (if appropriate).
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of emails and communications with parents

#### **4. School processes for recording attendance and absence**

##### **Attendance Registers (see Appendix 1 Attendance Codes)**

Class registers are completed via the electronic registration system, each morning and at the start of each afternoon session.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

## **5. Arrival, lateness and registration**

Pupils must be in the school ready to register by 08:45. Children can enter the classroom from 8:40.

The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.

**Morning registration ends at 08:55.** If a child arrives after the registration period BUT before 09:05, he/she will be marked as 'Late' but present in school (no absence).

**If a child arrives after 09:05,** he/she is recorded as late after registration closed and will have an 'unauthorised late' mark. This is equivalent to a session of unauthorised absence

**The afternoon registration starts at 13:00 / closes at 13:05.**

## **6. Absence**

### **Informing the school of an absence**

Parents are required to inform the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 09:15 via email. Parents should state the pupil's name & year group plus reason for absence and details of illness. If the absence continues parents must update the office daily (unless parents have been advised by a doctor that the child needs to stay at home an identified period and this information has been relayed to the school office). Parents are always required to provide written confirmation detailing the reasons for any absence (via email or letter). This is in addition to any oral communication of the reasons for an absence.

We will record 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.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

If a child is identified as being late consistently, they will be asked to meeting with the attendance champion. If there is no improvement, the school may request to issue a Penalty notice under the GCC/National Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

### **Planned Absence**

Absence for medical reasons should be made in writing.

- 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. **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.

Any absence for **non-medical reasons** should be formally requested in writing using the 'Term Time Absence form' (see appendix 2).

## St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (October 2025)

- 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.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time include (but are not limited to) attendance of a funeral or wedding (of a close relative) or a specific, family emergency that is judged to be a valid reason for non-attendance.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)

- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- 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 (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

### 7. Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may insert your measures e.g. following missing protocols – contact police etc.
- 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 case should be escalated to the DSL so that relevant safeguarding enquiries can be made including, if appropriate, the involvement of external agencies (such as social care or the GCC Access to Education Team).

### 8. Promoting attendance

As a school we want to work closely with parents and pupils to reduce absenteeism (through both authorised and unauthorised absence) and improve attendance levels across all age groups. We deal with individual cases on an individual basis and the Head Teacher, in consultation with an Inclusion Officer from the Gloucestershire Education Inclusion Team, if necessary, will determine how best to proceed in each case.

Strategies that may be employed include setting personalised attendance targets and attendance records, celebrating attendance in assemblies and establishing support plans and specific targets for improvement.

## **9. Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing**

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels via letter and / or email / face-to-face meetings.
- Monitor attendance and absence data monthly, across the school and at an individual pupil level (this will be more frequent for pupils whose attendance is a concern, e.g. those in the persistent absentee category).
- Identify whether 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.
- 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to relevant staff (such as class teachers, SLT members, pastoral support staff etc.) 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

The school administration assistants enter attendance information on to the SIMs database and collates / submits data to the DfE as required. Each term a report is printed detailing attendance by class and highlighting those pupils with the poorest attendance records across the school. This information is given to the Head Teacher who will identify any individual or groups of children whose attendance is a cause for concern.

If a child has an attendance figure lower than 90% then their parents will receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns regarding their child's attendance (unless the Head Teacher is satisfied that the absences were essential). If a child's attendance does not improve over the identified period, they will be contacted again and further action considered.

If a child has an attendance figure lower than 85% then they will receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns regarding their child's attendance and the requirement for improvement over the next term (the Head Teacher will identify a target for improvement and this will be shared with both the child and his/her parents). If the child's attendance does not meet the agreed target (over the identified period) the child's case will be referred to Gloucestershire Education Inclusion Team. The school reserves the right to authorise issue of a penalty notice (on advice of the Education Inclusion Team) if a pupil's attendance does not show any improvement (or deteriorates) over or after the identified target period.

## **10. Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

Only the headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence. There are limited circumstances that would constitute an authorised absence and would typically relate to:

- an illness that meant the child was not well enough to attend school;
- a medical appointment (that could not be arranged for outside school hours);
- an approved off-site educational activity
- reasons authorised as exceptional circumstances.

We discourage any unnecessary absence from school and will only authorise absence for non-medical reasons in exceptional circumstances.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Holidays not agreed

## **11. 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
- Send 'attendance concerns' letters to parents to inform them of attendance issues and identify required improvement with review periods (see Appendix 3 for example letter)
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Use the graduated pathway to identify targets and support, and explore options for support via external agencies such as Early Help.
- If a pupil has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within 10 school weeks, parents may be issued with a 'Notice to Improve' notification, sent via email on behalf of the school and issued by Gloucestershire County Council.
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

## **12. Legal Sanctions**

***See Appendix 4 (Information on all legal proceedings)***

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met.

Notices to Improve and Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct available via <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/>

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

-All natural parents, whether they are married or not

## St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (October 2025)

- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

If a child of compulsory education age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at alternative provision made for them then the parent may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice may be issued if your child fails to attend school regularly and punctually, and the absence is recorded by the school as unauthorised, you are guilty of a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

This could include:

- Unauthorised absences for holidays during term time (10 sessions of G-coded absences)
- Arriving late after the register has closed
- Being seen in a public place during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion during school hours

The Local Authority has the power to prosecute parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Schools can, in some circumstances, request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice where parents have failed to secure regular attendance at school.

We will consider the 'Steps to take before initiating legal proceedings' document to ensure all voluntary support options have been tried.

In line with the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance, we have drafted a Parenting Contract for schools to use.

The first stage in the legal process is to write to parents informing them that they may be at risk of prosecution and invite them to attend a mutually agreed Attendance Improvement Meeting.

Should there be no improvement, discuss the case with your Inclusion Officer. They will support you in completing the 'Request to Initiate Legal Proceedings' form

### 13. Children Missing in Education (CME)

The CME guidance from Gloucestershire County Council will be followed in relation to any potential CME case.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/children-missing-education/>

*Children Missing Education (CME) refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for at least 4 weeks'.*

*CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either*

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or*
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or left school suddenly and the destination is unknown*

If a parent decides to transfer their child to a new school, they must complete a 'leaver's form' that details the child's new school. The new school will then be contacted to confirm that they have a place allocated to the child. The child must not be removed from the school roll until the new school makes a formal request for the child's information (through the CTF / Common Transfer File). If there are any concerns regarding the validity of the transfer or the contact from the new school, the Head Teacher should be informed.

In the event of an enquiry from another school regarding a child who is believed to be joining St Mary's (but has not been offered /accepted a place) the child's details (name and UPN) will be requested and the head teacher will liaise directly with the enquiring school.

If a child who has accepted a place at St Mary's, does not commence school, the previous will be contacted to ascertain whether the pupil is still attending at the setting. If the child is not attending the previous setting, and has not commenced schooling at St Mary's, the CME process will be followed.

#### **14. Safeguarding & Child Protection**

- If any child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan is absent, without reasonable explanation, for 2 consecutive days (or more) then the Head Teacher will notify the social care professional who is responsible for the child.
- If a member of staff is concerned that there may be a child protection concern relating to a child, the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be informed immediately.
- If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be notified immediately.
- Always refer to the school Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy for further information regarding reporting concerns and handling disclosures.

## Appendix 1 (Register codes)

Attendance codes, descriptions and meanings (see also Covid-19 codes – Appendix 2)

### School Attendance Codes 2024

| Present Codes         |                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| / \                   | present during registration                                                           |
| B                     | educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes               |
| K                     | attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996   |
| L                     | arrived after the register has started but before it has closed                       |
| P                     | participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school                 |
| V                     | educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff                  |
| W                     | attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority         |
| Absent Codes          |                                                                                       |
| Authorised Absences   |                                                                                       |
| C                     | absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher                   |
| C1                    | in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad                    |
| C2                    | absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)   |
| D                     | dual registered                                                                       |
| E                     | suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made                  |
| I                     | illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments) |
| J1                    | job/school/college interview                                                          |
| M                     | medical or dental appointment                                                         |
| Q                     | unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements                             |
| R                     | religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)              |
| S                     | study leave                                                                           |
| T                     | parent travelling for occupational purposes                                           |
| X                     | non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school                         |
| Y1                    | unable to attend due to transport provided not being available                        |
| Y2                    | unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption                               |
| Y3                    | unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed         |
| Y4                    | unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure                               |
| Y5                    | unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention                            |
| Y6                    | unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law                     |
| Y7                    | unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)  |
| Unauthorised Absences |                                                                                       |
| G                     | holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)       |
| N                     | reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)              |
| O                     | absent in other or unknown circumstances                                              |
| U                     | late after register has closed                                                        |
| Administrative Codes  |                                                                                       |
| Z                     | prospective pupil not yet on register                                                 |
| #                     | planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)        |

Appendix 2 (Term-Time absence request form)

REQUEST TO TAKE A CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

**This form must be completed and returned to school in advance of any planned absence.**

**PLEASE REMEMBER:** We are unable to authorise any absence during term-time unless there are particular 'exceptional circumstances' that apply. Each request will be considered on an individual basis to determine whether there are 'exceptional circumstances'

Absence from school can seriously disrupt your child's continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away; they are also less well prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which together we must seek to avoid. If a child misses a week of school each academic year then, over the course of their primary schooling, they will have missed an entire term of their education.

I would like to take my son/daughter ..... (Year: ) out of school during term time.

Dates – From .....to .....

REASON:

.....  
.....  
.....

Parent/Guardian Signature .....Name .....

**For school use only:**

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Re: ..... (Child's name) (Year .....)

Further to your recent request for leave of absence.

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| Current<br>Attendance<br>% |
|----------------------------|

☐ Leave of absence of ..... sessions (..... days) **unauthorised**

between .....and .....

☐ Your child has ..... unauthorised absences this academic year. Please note that a penalty notice may be issued if a pupil has over 10 unauthorised absences.

.....

Due to the exceptional circumstances that apply in this instance, the Governors have decided to grant a period of authorised absence.

☐ Leave of absence of .....sessions (..... days) **authorised** between.....and .....

Signed : ..... (Headteacher) Date: .....

Additional comments:

### Appendix 3 (Example parent attendance concerns letter)

#### Attendance Concerns

| <u>Name (Year)</u><br>X | <u>Current Attendance</u> (to 15.3.2024)<br>X% | <u>Total School Days lost</u><br>X |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Dear Parent,

I am writing to share our concerns about X's level of absence for the current academic year. His / Her attendance percentage is well below school average (95.5%) and places him/her in the 'persistent absentee' category.

We understand that children may occasionally be absent from school (due to health or medical needs) but your child's absences exceed what would be considered typical and we are concerned that, unless your child's attendance improves, the academic and wider consequences will be significant.

It is important that pupils attend school every day (unless absence is completely unavoidable) so they participate in all available activities and have the best chance to fully succeed with their learning. Your child's current level of absence will directly impact upon their academic progress and well-being, so it is essential that swift and sustained improvement is achieved.

We will monitor your child's absence over the next 5 school weeks and provide you with an update. If your child's attendance does not improve (over the monitoring period) we will need to put more formal measures in place. I have attached a parent/care information leaflet, for your reference.

A copy of your child's registration certificate has been enclosed.

Yours sincerely

*Liam Jordan*

Head Teacher

#### Attendance expectations

| 175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR<br>175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments |                                             |                                                                                |                                                              |                                                                    |                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 190<br>DAYS FOR YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION EACH YEAR                                                                                  | 10 days absence<br>180<br>DAYS OF EDUCATION | 19 days absence<br>171<br>DAYS OF EDUCATION                                    | 29 days absence<br>A term missed<br>161<br>DAYS OF EDUCATION | 38 days absence<br>152<br>DAYS OF EDUCATION                        | 47 days absence<br>143<br>DAYS OF EDUCATION |
| 100%                                                                                                                              | 95%                                         | 90%                                                                            | 85%                                                          | 80%                                                                | 75%                                         |
| <b>Good</b><br>Best chance of success.<br>Gets your child off to a flying start                                                   |                                             | <b>Worrying</b><br>Less chance of success.<br>Makes it harder to make progress |                                                              | <b>Serious Concern</b><br>Not fair on your child.<br>Court action! |                                             |

### Appendix 4 (Information on all legal proceedings)

The legal process can lead to a criminal conviction for parents. GCC follows the 'Support First' guidance from the Department for Education, and we ask you to ensure that legal action is the last avenue for attendance.

#### Introduction

Schools and the Local Authority (LA) work together to ensure students attend school regularly. When attendance issues arise, various legal interventions can be used to support and enforce attendance.

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (October 2025)

## Support First Approach

Before considering legal action, schools should provide support to families to improve attendance. Legal action is a last resort after all other avenues have been explored.

## Gloucestershire County Council's Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices

The Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

## Legal Powers

The LA can prosecute parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Schools can request the LA to issue Notices to Improve (NTIs) and Penalty Notices (PNs) when attendance does not improve.

## Steps for Legal Intervention

### 1. Attendance Intervention Meetings (AIM)

- Inform parents/carers in writing about the intention to start intervention meetings.
- Include details such as the child's name, date of birth, current attendance, and previous attendance records.
- Outline the support provided and reasons for considering legal intervention.

### 2. Notice to Improve (NTI)

- Request an NTI from the LA if a child has 10 unauthorised absences within 10 school weeks.
- School Attendance Codes may be found [here](#).
- Absences can unexplained absences (Code N), and other unauthorised absences (Codes O and U), and a combination of these absences with holidays/leisure-related absences (Code G) N.B. for 10 sessions of G-coded absences, an NTI is not required before requesting a penalty notice.
- Submit the request via the [JADU form](#) with required information.

### 3. Penalty Notice (PN)

- Schools are obliged to consider requesting a penalty notice for a pupil who has 10 sessions of G-coded absences within the preceding 10 school weeks of the request date via the [Capita Module](#).
- When an NTI has been issued, after three weeks of no improvement in attendance, schools may request a PN via the [Capita Module](#).
- When requesting the penalty notice, add in the dates of the absences within the past 10 weeks. There must be at least 10 unauthorised sessions within the last ten weeks; these may not be the dates that were requested as part of the NTI. Please do not add in any sessions when the pupil is present or has an authorised absence i.e. this may be a block of dates but if there are sessions when the pupil has been present, then these dates should not be included e.g. 07/04/2025 - 09/04/2025 + 11/04/2025
- Penalty notices can lead to fines and, if unpaid, further legal action.
- [Here is the video on the Capita module.](#)
- Evidence required unauthorised holiday or leisure-related purposes (G code)
  - Where possible, please upload documents in one PDF file
  - 2024-2025 School Attendance Policy
  - Attendance certificate showing the leave, and return to school, clearly identifying the name and DOB of the pupil, signed and dated by the headteacher

## St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (October 2025)

- Request for leave of absence completed by the parent(s)
- Response to the leave of absence request
- When no request was made, the letter sent to each parent, asking them for the reasons for the absence; a week's notice for a reply can be included
- Any further information you you feel we should know N.B. This may include reasons for requesting a PN for both parents when they are separated; normally, GCC will only issue to the parent(s) removing the child from school.
- Evidence required for combination, late or other unauthorised absences (O/U/N/G)
  - Has a notice to improve already been requested and issued? N.B. a Penalty Notice for Other Unauthorised Absences or Combination of Unauthorised Absences may only be requested following the issue of a Notice to Improve.
  - 2024-2025 School Attendance Policy
  - Attendance certificate showing the absences of the pupil, clearly identifying the name and DOB of the pupil, signed and dated by the headteacher
  - Copy of the Notice to Improve issued to the parents/carers by the Education Inclusion Team, GCC
  - Copy of the school's central log (e.g., CPOMS/Sims/Bromcom etc) with records pertaining to attendance issues; acronyms explained and accessible for reading
  - Copies of correspondence from the school to the parents/carers; parents' names, the date and address clearly showing; reference to legal intervention; stating absences will only be considered illness with medical proof
  - Copies of correspondence from the parents/carers to the school showing date received
  - Any other supportive material that corresponds with the NTI request submitted to the local authority

If a penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the EIS team will alter the status to 'Proceed to Prosecution' on the Capita Module. An email will be sent to the school via the Capita Module to inform them of the change in status. Schools should complete a witness statement, prepare the supportive exhibits and email them to [attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk). The template and support presentation on how to prepare the documents are available under Useful Documents on this page. Further support can be found here: [Training and Support](#).

### Pupils Seen in Public Within Five Days of Being Excluded

Contact your Inclusion Officer to discuss requesting a penalty notice for a pupil being seen in a public place during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion during school hours. These penalty notices will not be requested through the Capita One Module Portal and the fines are set at £60 for the first 21 days after issue, rising to £120 after 21 days to 28 days after issue.

### Information on Withdrawing Penalty Notices

Once a penalty notice is issued, parents/carers will receive a letter about their child's absence. If there are errors in the notice or new information shows it shouldn't have been issued, the school can request to withdraw it.

### Reasons for withdrawing a penalty notice:

- Issued to the wrong person
- Contains incorrect information
- Should not have been issued
- No further action will be taken by the Local Authority (LA)
- Not paid

Normally, the notice is issued to the parent(s) who removed the child from school. Additional support is available for issuing notices to separated parents.

If a penalty notice is withdrawn, a new request cannot be made for the same absence. Parents/carers will be informed that no further action will be taken for that absence.

## **St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (October 2025)**

The LA decides whether a penalty notice will be issued or withdrawn. They will contact the school if there are reasons to withdraw the notice.

### **4. Prosecution**

- If attendance does not improve after two penalty notices within a rolling three-year period, the LA may prosecute parents.
- Legal outcomes can include fines up to £2,500, imprisonment, community orders, or parenting orders.

### **Statutory Defences include:**

- Agreed leave of absence
- Child too ill to attend school
- Unavoidable absence due to exceptional circumstances
- Absence for religious observance
- School not within walking distance and no suitable alternative provided
- No fixed abode and travelling for work

### **Burden of Proof**

It is for the parents to prove that one or more of these defences apply. It is not a defence to say that you did not know that your child was absent from school or that there were other reasons for them not attending school e.g., that they were being bullied at the time.

### **Prosecution Information**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 confirms the following time periods before a sentence is classed as spent:

- A custodial sentence of 1 year or less - the end of the period of 12 months beginning with the day on which the sentence (including any licence period) is completed
- A relevant order (e.g. community order) - the last day on which the order is to have effect
- A fine - the end of the period of 12 months beginning with the date of the conviction

After the period ends, the conviction is still on the person's record and could come up on an Enhanced Records Check, but the defendant would be classed as a "protected person". They are essentially treated as if they have not been convicted of the offence. Before the rehabilitation period ends, the defendant must disclose the conviction when asked.

### **Important Considerations for Schools**

- Always communicate with parents individually and include them in all meetings.
- Ensure all correspondence is clear and detailed. Support for schools' paperwork is available under 'Paperwork Checklist for All Legal Disposals'.
- Monitor attendance during improvement periods and follow up as needed.

### **Important Considerations for the LA**

- Previous Notices to Improve and Penalty Notices issued for the same child and same offence within a rolling-three year period.
- Requirements in the Attorney-General's Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors
- Appropriate use of PACE cautioning

## **St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy (October 2025)**

- Consideration of an Education Supervision Order
- Age of the pupil

**Contact Information** For further support, contact your Inclusion Officer or email [attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk).

### **Useful Definitions**

#### **Parent**

Generally, parents include:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- Those who have day to day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

#### **School**

School is used in this document to include all educational providers used by Gloucestershire County Council to educate pupils of statutory school age including academies, free schools, colleges, and alternative provision schools.

### **Compulsory School Age**

- A child begins to be of statutory school age on the prescribed day which either falls on or follows their fifth birthday
- The prescribed days are currently 31 August, 31 December and 31 March. This is the term following their 5th birthday
- A child ceases to be of statutory school age on the school leaving date in the academic year in which they turn 16
- The school leaving date is the last Friday in June
- Raising the participation age does not affect the statutory school age
- An academic year commences on 1 September and ends on 31 August