

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



2026-2027

Our Mission

'At SS John and Monica's, we learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other'

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2026-2027

SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School

1. Rationale and principles

At SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School, regular attendance is central to pupils' education, safeguarding, wellbeing and sense of belonging. Our Mission calls us to love, respect, understand and value each other. We therefore aim to work positively and respectfully with pupils and families, recognising that barriers to attendance can be complex and that early support is often the most effective way to improve attendance.

The school expects every pupil to attend every session that they are required to attend, unless absence is authorised or another statutory attendance code applies. We will promote high expectations, identify concerns early, listen to pupils and families, provide or facilitate support, and use formal or legal intervention only where appropriate.

Attendance is everybody's responsibility. Good attendance is not simply a percentage: it supports continuity of learning, relationships, safeguarding, personal development and future outcomes.

2. Statutory framework and guidance

This policy has been updated for the 2026-27 academic year with regard to current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996, including parental duties relating to regular school attendance and local authority powers and duties.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Working together to improve school attendance, updated July 2026.
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Children missing education, updated September 2025.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and other relevant safeguarding guidance.
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and relevant health protection guidance.

Where national legislation, statutory guidance or Birmingham City Council procedures change during the lifetime of this policy, the school will follow the current requirements and update this policy as necessary.

3. Our attendance aims

- Create a culture in which good attendance is expected, valued and understood.
- Maintain the school's aspiration for attendance to be at least 97%, while responding sensitively to individual circumstances and statutory duties.
- Reduce absence, persistent absence and severe absence and improve punctuality.
- Identify patterns and barriers early and work with families to address them.
- Ensure attendance practice is inclusive and does not disadvantage pupils because of disability, SEND, medical need or other protected characteristics.
- Use attendance information intelligently to identify pupils and groups requiring support.
- Work effectively with Birmingham City Council, health, social care, SEND services and other partners.

- Ensure that legal intervention is considered when support is not appropriate, has not been successful or has not been engaged with.

4. Key definitions

Term	Meaning
Regular attendance	Attendance at every session the pupil is required to attend, unless absence is authorised or another statutory code applies.
Authorised absence	An absence for which leave has been granted by the school or which falls within a statutory authorised category.
Unauthorised absence	An absence that has not been authorised, including absence without an acceptable reason and arrival after the register has closed.
Persistent absence (PA)	Missing 10% or more of possible school sessions, whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. This is broadly equivalent to attendance of 90% or below.
Severe absence	Missing 50% or more of possible school sessions. Pupils at this level require particularly intensive, often multi-agency, support.
Late before register closes	The pupil arrives after the start of the session but before the register closes. Code L is used and the pupil is counted as present.
Late after register closes	The pupil arrives after the register has closed. Code U is used and this counts as unauthorised absence for that session.
Children Missing Education (CME)	Children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. A registered pupil who is absent is not automatically CME, but unexplained or prolonged absence may trigger safeguarding and local authority action.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- recognise improving attendance as a school leadership responsibility and provide appropriate challenge and support;
- review attendance information regularly, including persistent and severe absence and the attendance of vulnerable groups;
- ensure the school complies with statutory attendance duties and that leaders have appropriate resources and training;
- appoint an Attendance Link Governor and receive termly attendance reports.

The Head Teacher / Senior Attendance Champion will:

- have overall responsibility for the school's attendance strategy, policy and practice;
- set a clear vision for attendance, communicate expectations and ensure staff understand their roles;
- monitor whole-school, group and individual attendance and ensure timely support and escalation;
- report to governors and work with Birmingham City Council and other agencies;
- decide whether leave of absence may be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Office and attendance staff will:

- maintain accurate electronic admission and attendance registers using the statutory national codes;
- complete first-day absence checks and follow up unexplained absence promptly;
- record late arrival and reasons for absence accurately;
- maintain records of contacts, meetings, support and formal attendance action;
- make required attendance data returns and share data with the Department for Education and local authority in accordance with statutory requirements.

Class teachers and other staff will complete registers accurately and promptly, promote positive attendance and punctuality, notice changes or patterns, and pass concerns to the attendance/safeguarding team without delay.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time;
- telephone the school on the first morning of every absence and provide the reason for absence;
- keep the school informed during continuing absence and provide up-to-date contact details;
- work with the school and relevant services to overcome barriers to attendance;
- book routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where reasonably possible and provide appointment information when requested;
- avoid taking leave or holidays during term time and request any necessary leave in advance;
- tell the school promptly about changes that may affect attendance, including changes of address or school.

6. School day, registration and punctuality

Classrooms open from 8.40am. The school day begins at 8.50am and pupils should be in class ready to learn by this time.

- Pupils arriving after 8.50am but before 9.15am will normally be recorded as late (Code L).
- The morning register closes at 9.15am. A pupil arriving after this time will normally be recorded as Code U - late after registration closed - which is an unauthorised absence for the morning session.
- Afternoon registration is at 1.00pm for Reception/Key Stage 1 and 1.15pm for Key Stage 2.

The school will monitor patterns of lateness and work with families to resolve barriers. Repeated late arrival after the register has closed contributes to the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

7. Day-to-day absence procedures and safeguarding

Parents should contact the school on the first morning of absence, ideally before 9.00am, explaining why their child is absent and, where possible, when they expect the child to return.

1. If no reason has been received, the Office will contact parents/carers on the first day. Until the circumstances are established, Code N may be used temporarily.
2. If contact has still not been made, the school will continue attempts using the emergency contacts provided and will consider the pupil's known vulnerabilities, safeguarding information and any involvement of other services.
3. Where there is concern for a pupil's welfare or whereabouts, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may arrange a safe-and-well check, contact the pupil's social worker or other professionals, and/or make a referral to Birmingham Children's Trust or other appropriate service. Action will be based on risk and will not wait for a fixed number of days where there is an immediate concern.
4. If the reason for absence remains unknown, the school will continue enquiries and follow local Children Missing Education and attendance procedures. Code N must not be left indefinitely and will be replaced with the appropriate code once circumstances are established or after the permitted period.

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence, sudden changes in attendance and patterns of absence will be considered alongside other safeguarding information.

8. Illness, medical needs and medical appointments

Children who are genuinely too unwell to attend should remain at home. Parents should follow current NHS/UKHSA advice on when children should stay away from school because of infectious illness. The school will not use a fixed list in this policy because health protection advice can change.

The school will not routinely require medical evidence for every illness. However, where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of illness, or where attendance is a concern, the school may ask for appropriate evidence. This will be proportionate and could include an appointment card, prescription information, hospital letter or other suitable evidence. The school will not expect families to incur a charge to obtain evidence.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where an appointment during school time is unavoidable, pupils should attend school for as much of the session as possible. The school may ask to see appointment confirmation.

Pupils with long-term physical or mental health conditions, disabilities or SEND will be supported in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice and the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements. Attendance support will focus on removing barriers and making reasonable adjustments; pupils will not be penalised for absence that is legitimately connected to their needs.

9. Leave of absence and holidays in term time

The Head Teacher may grant a leave of absence only where the law allows it. For leave requested because of exceptional circumstances, the decision rests with the Head Teacher, who will consider each request individually, taking account of the specific facts and circumstances.

A family holiday or travel for leisure during term time will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised. Parents should submit any request before the absence occurs and provide the information reasonably required to consider it.

Where unauthorised leave is taken, the absence will be recorded using the appropriate statutory code. The school may refer the matter to Birmingham City Council for consideration of a penalty notice in accordance with the National Framework.

Where a pupil does not return when expected, the school will make enquiries promptly and follow safeguarding, admission register and Children Missing Education procedures. A pupil will only be removed from the school roll where a statutory ground for deletion applies; a school place is not removed simply because a parent has taken an unauthorised holiday.

10. Religious observance

The school will authorise absence where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. The statutory Code R will be used. Parents should inform the school in advance where possible. Requests connected with cultural or family events that do not meet the statutory definition will be considered under the relevant leave-of-absence rules.

11. Support-first approach

In line with Working together to improve school attendance, the school will take a 'support first' approach. We will seek to understand why a pupil is absent, listen to the pupil and family, and agree practical actions to improve attendance. Support may include school-based pastoral help, Early Help, SEND support, reasonable adjustments, health support, family support or work with external agencies.

Where attendance concerns emerge, the school's graduated response may include:

- early contact and discussion with the family;
- review of attendance patterns and the pupil's voice;
- a meeting to identify barriers and agree actions;
- an Attendance Support Plan and clear review period;
- Early Help or multi-agency support where appropriate;
- a formal attendance contract where voluntary support has not secured improvement and this is appropriate;
- a Notice to Improve where the national penalty notice threshold has been met and support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with;

- referral to Birmingham City Council for legal intervention where appropriate.

For pupils who are severely absent, the school will prioritise intensive support and work with the local authority and other services. Safeguarding, SEND, health and the local authority's section 19 education duties will be considered where relevant.

12. National Framework for Penalty Notices

A penalty notice is one possible legal intervention; it is not an automatic consequence of every unauthorised absence. Under the National Framework, schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when the national threshold is met.

The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The 10 sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and the 10-school-week period may span different terms or school years.

Where the threshold is met, the school will consider the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate or has been provided, and whether a penalty notice or another intervention is the most appropriate response. For unauthorised term-time leave, support may not be appropriate before legal action is considered.

Within a rolling 3-year period	Penalty	Position
First penalty notice	£160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.	Issued per parent, per child where appropriate.
Second penalty notice for the same parent and child	£160 payable within 28 days; no reduced rate.	Higher rate applies.
Third occasion where the threshold is met for the same parent and child	A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the 3-year period.	Alternative legal action will be considered; this may include prosecution.

Penalty notices are issued in accordance with Birmingham City Council procedures and the current national framework. Failure to pay a penalty notice may lead to prosecution. Other legal interventions available to the local authority can include prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, an Education Supervision Order, a School Attendance Order or a parenting order, where the relevant legal tests are met.

13. Attendance contracts and Notices to Improve

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement intended to address irregular attendance through clear actions and support. It is not a punishment. Where a contract is used, the school and/or local authority will set out the attendance concerns, support offered, actions expected of the parent and pupil where appropriate, and arrangements for review.

A Notice to Improve may be used as a final opportunity for a parent to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued where the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate. A Notice to Improve is not required in every case, for example where support is not appropriate, such as some unauthorised term-time leave cases.

14. Children Missing Education, admissions and elective home education

The school will follow the statutory Children Missing Education guidance and Birmingham City Council procedures when a pupil's whereabouts or onward education are unknown. The school will make reasonable enquiries jointly with the local authority and will not remove a pupil from the admission register unless a statutory ground for deletion is met.

If a parent informs the school that they intend to electively home educate, the school will follow the legal process and notify the local authority as required. Where there are safeguarding concerns, the school will share relevant information with the appropriate agencies. Elective home education must not be used as a response to unresolved school attendance difficulties without proper consideration of the child's needs and circumstances.

15. SEND, disability, mental health and other barriers

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance because of SEND, disability, physical or mental health needs, caring responsibilities, family circumstances, bullying, transport or other difficulties. The school will take these circumstances seriously while maintaining high expectations for attendance.

- Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled pupils.
- Attendance expectations and support will be individualised where necessary without lowering educational ambition.
- The school will work with the SENCO and relevant professionals to ensure that attendance plans are compatible with SEND provision and Education, Health and Care Plans.
- Part-time or temporary reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest time necessary, with parental agreement and regular review, and will be recorded using the correct statutory codes.
- Where illness is likely to prevent a pupil attending for 15 school days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively, the school will liaise with the local authority about its duties to arrange suitable education where applicable.

16. Attendance data, monitoring and information sharing

The attendance team will review attendance regularly, including individual pupils, groups and whole-school trends. Analysis will include persistent and severe absence, lateness, vulnerable pupils and patterns by day, session or reason.

- Attendance information will be shared with relevant staff so that support can be coordinated.
- The Head Teacher will report attendance information to governors at least termly.
- The school will benchmark attendance against local and national information where useful.
- The school will provide attendance data to the Department for Education and local authority in accordance with statutory data-sharing requirements.
- Personal information will be handled in accordance with UK data protection law and the school's privacy notices.

17. Promoting attendance positively

The school will promote attendance through positive relationships, clear communication and recognition of effort and improvement. Recognition will be inclusive and will avoid disadvantaging pupils whose disability, medical condition or other legitimate circumstances affect attendance. The school may celebrate strong attendance, improved attendance, punctuality and positive engagement, but rewards will not be used in a way that pressures children to attend when they are genuinely unwell.

18. Current national attendance codes - Appendix 1

The school will use the statutory attendance codes in force. The following codes have applied from 19 August 2024 and remain the current national framework for 2026-27.

Code	Current description / use
/	Present - morning session
\	Present - afternoon session
B	Attending another place for an approved educational activity
C	Absent with leave for other circumstances
C1	Absent with leave for a regulated performance
C2	Absent with leave because a temporary reduced timetable does not require attendance
D	Attending another school at which the pupil is registered
E	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision made
G	Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday
I	Unable to attend because of sickness
J1	Absent with leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority under relevant statutory duties
L	Late before the register closes
M	Absent with leave for a medical or dental appointment
N	Absent - circumstances not yet established
O	Absent - other unauthorised circumstances
P	Attending an approved sporting activity
Q	Unable to attend because the local authority has not made required access arrangements
R	Religious observance

S	Study leave
T	Mobile child travelling with parent in the course of the parent's trade or business
U	Arrived after registration closed - unauthorised absence
V	Attending an approved educational visit or trip
W	Attending approved work experience
X	Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend by timetable
Y1	Unable to attend because normally provided transport is unavailable and school is not within walking distance
Y2	Unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by an emergency
Y3	Unable to attend because part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend because the whole school is unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend because the pupil is subject to a sentence of detention
Y6	Unable to attend because attendance would be contrary to or prohibited by public-health law/guidance
Y7	Unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause
Z	Prospective pupil entered on the register in advance of start date
#	Planned whole-school closure - no session

19. Linked policies and guidance

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Children Missing Education procedures
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Equality Policy / Equality Information and Objectives
- Positive Relationship and Behaviour Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices
- Birmingham City Council attendance, legal intervention and penalty notice procedures

20. Review

Updated: September 2026

Review: September 2027, or earlier if legislation, statutory guidance or local authority procedures change.

This policy should be read alongside the latest Department for Education statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' and Birmingham City Council attendance procedures.