



**St Augustine's**  
Catholic Voluntary Academy

**ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE AND CYCLE FOR PUPILS**

**EFFECTIVE: NOVEMBER 2021**

**REVIEW: NOVEMBER 2025**

**St. Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Kesteven Road, Stamford  
PE9 1SR**

## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy (the School) is committed to providing a high quality and effective education for all pupils. The School believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all its pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and punctuality and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

This procedure was agreed by the Headteacher in November 2021. The review should be carried out every four years or earlier if required.

## **3. AIMS**

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure attendance at school.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported at some stage to meet their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. The School will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend the School to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

## **4. EXPECTATIONS**

(See also the Home/School Agreement)

### **A) The School expects its pupils to:**

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time.
- Be appropriately prepared for the day.
- Tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

**B) The School expects its parents to:**

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Ensure that their children arrive on time. Registers open when the class doors are opened and remain open for 15 minutes. A child is considered late if he/she does not arrive within 15 minutes after registers have closed. A child arriving more than 30 minutes or more late will be marked as absent from the entire morning session and this absence will be Unauthorised.

<b>Classroom Door Opens</b>	<b>Registers Open</b>	<b>Registers Close</b>	<b>Marked Late in Registers (L)</b>	<b>Marked as Missing Morning Session (U)</b>
08:45	08:45	09:00	09:00 - 09:15	After 09:15

- Contact the School before 0830 whenever their child is absent giving details of the reason or the absence and the length of time the child will be away. If the school is closed the parent may leave a message on the answerphone.
- Help their children prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and that their children have everything required for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect their children.
- Contact the School if problems arise which may keep their children away from school, so that the School can help.
- Avoid taking family holidays in term-time. Term time absences, especially during SATs and examination periods, will seriously risk the progress of their child.

**C) The School will:**

- Maintain an attendance register on which pupils are marked present, absent or late.
- Ensure that its staff adhere to the rules regarding the registration period which is 15 minutes in length at the beginning of the morning session and 10 minutes in length at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- Ensure that registration across the whole school follows the table set out above.
- Ensure that absences are left blank in the register by the teacher unless they know the exact reason for the absence and the correct symbol; if unknown the register will be left blank or "N" entered
- Ensure that absences are checked daily by a member of the office staff. Those parents who have not provided a reason for absence will be contacted. At that point the registers will be updated so that every child has an attendance or absence mark against them for both sessions daily.
- Ensure that attendance registers are kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used to support vulnerable pupils with poor attendance if this becomes a barrier to their achievement in school. It may also be used to support them academically and/or socially.
- Follow the protocol established for maintaining the confidentiality of data under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 which places obligations

on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the regulations. The School has a Data Protection (Under GDPR) Policy which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in legislation prevents the School sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

- Follow Lincolnshire County Council and Department for Education processes for poor attendance, links of which are found in the Appendix to this policy.

## **5. ATTENDANCE SYSTEMS**

### **A) Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)**

- Only the School, in the context of the law, can authorise absence. A note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher or member of the office staff does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason, then the matter must be referred to the School's Pastoral Team.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Pastoral Team.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.

### **B) Authorised or Unauthorised Absence**

Authorised absence is where the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.

The following reasons may be considered as authorised absences:

- Illness, (including Covid-19).
- Family bereavements.
- Medical and dental appointments.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or reinstated.

Absences should not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Not being able to bring the children into school due to parental illness.
- Absence from school due because of concerns about illnesses at the school.
- Holidays in term time.
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- Shopping trips.
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
- No reason given.
- School staff have cause to believe that the information provided is not genuine or not valid.

### **C) Family Holidays**

Parents should not take pupils on holiday during the school term. Parents have 14 weeks each year when their children are not required to be in school. Holidays during term time can significantly disrupt both the academic and social development of the child. The School will not endorse and therefore not authorise holidays during term time.

When monitoring attendance, the School may take further action if a child is removed from school for a family holiday during term time.

### **D) Resolving Disagreements**

Where there is a lack of agreement between the School and the Local Education Authority (LEA) as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.

### **E) Approved Educational Activity**

Where pupils are away from the School but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way, but the children are counted as present. To avoid confusion in emergency situations, pupils who are off-site for field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas should not be marked as present.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Pastoral lead to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

### **F) Lateness**

The School will actively discourage late arrival by asking parents whose children arrive late to provide a written explanation. A child entering school up to 30 minutes after the registers have closed is marked as late and the letter L is entered into the register to indicate that they are on site. A child entering school 30 minutes after the beginning of the morning or afternoon session are marked as absent from the entire session, with the letter U being entered into the registers. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present.

### **G) Removal from the School Roll**

Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.

- Where the School has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the School and the parents have satisfied the LEA that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.

- Where the School has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Pastoral lead has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the School has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where the pupil has ceased to attend the School and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the School.
- Where a pupil has not returned to the School within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

## **H) Ensuring Pupil Information Is Up To Date**

The School will ensure, as far as possible, that the information it holds on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Data will be kept up to date in line with the School's Data Protection (under GDPR) Policy.

## **I) Pupils Who Are Missing**

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National Missing Pupils Database and the Attendance Team at Lincolnshire County Council.

See also the School's Pupil Missing Education Policy for further information.

## **J) Pupils Who Fail to Attend**

When a pupil does not attend, the School needs to respond effectively:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone.
- Where there is no response, the register is marked as 'no reason provided for absence'.
- Parents will be contacted on every day the child is still not in school, until the day the child returns. Parents will then be asked to explain the absence.
- On the sixth school day of an unexplained absence, the family will be contacted by any means possible, including home visits and an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may be contacted. This may in appropriate cases, result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- Non-attendance beyond 10 school days is reported to the LEA. After 10 school days of non-attendance, unless other action is planned, the parents will be invited to attend a meeting in the School. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, EWO, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending the School.

- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the EWO with a view to a formal referral being made to the EWS, if one has not already been made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made then the case will be reviewed and further action planned.
- At any point during a child's unauthorised or unexplained absence, the Pastoral lead may conduct a welfare check at the family home.

#### **K) Reintegration**

The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme.

Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme. All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible. Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required. The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary. Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees.

#### **L) When A Pupil's Attendance Falls Below 95%**

The School will follow the Attendance Cycle, taking appropriate action at each stage in line with Lincolnshire County Council protocols and DfE guidance (see Appendix 1.1 & 1.2).

#### **M) Guidance On The Issue Of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) And/Or Prosecution**

The School follows the guidance of Lincolnshire County Council on the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices under their Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Conduct dated January 2014 which is available at:

[www.lincolnshire.gov.uk > file > fixed-penalty-notice-code-of-conduct](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk > file > fixed-penalty-notice-code-of-conduct)

This advice includes:

- The Law
- Use of Fixed Penalty Notices
- When a Penalty Notice may be issued
- The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices
- The effect of a Penalty Notice being issued
- Appeals against Penalty Notices
- Non-Payment of the Penalty Notice
- Administration of Fixed Penalty Notices
- Sample letters for persistent absence/lateness and for holidays during term time

#### **N) Pupils Not Attending Regularly (PNAR) notification to the Local Authority**

PNAR refers to pupils who have not attended school for 10 or more consecutive days and the attendance is currently unauthorised due to no reason given by parents for absence, or reason given is not accepted by the school. Immediately following school closure, there is an acceptable degree of flexibility on the return day during which the school will encourage the child back into school and authorise the absence if they choose. Once this period has passed, and a further 10 days of unauthorised absence has been recorded, the school should notify the local authority of this child via the PNAR survey.

When the child returns, the school should notify the local authority by emailing [attendance@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@lincolnshire.gov.uk) putting **PNAR child returned** in the subject box. In the body of the email, the school should give the child's name, date of birth and date of return.

If the school decide to issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) or have requested prosecution for non-attendance, the school should notify the local authority as above indicating FPN or prosecution in the email. This does not replace the normal process for requesting a FPN.

At the point of receiving either of the emails above, the local authority will remove the pupil from the PNAR list, as there is evidence that the child is in education or that the school are addressing the non-attendance via the legal route.

At the end of the fifth term, the local authority will monitor which children in the system are still absent. The Inclusion and Attendance team may contact the school to discuss the case and the strategies that the school have put in place. This may be to consider a fixed penalty notice or prosecution if the school have not already taken this action.

A child may be recorded as PNAR because the school have yet to receive robust medical evidence to support the absence. If this is provided and the school then authorise past or further absences, the school must let the local authority know, as above and enter pupil on the **Reduced Timetable notification survey as 0 hours** and remove from the PNAR as outlined above.

Pupils who have a new school place but do not turn up to take this place after 10 days, may be recorded as PNAR. The school would be expected to carry out home visits and other communication with the family to establish that they are still at the place of residence and are not Children Missing Education (CME). If there is confirmation that they are CME, then the child can be removed from PNAR and the school follows the CME notification process.

## **P) EBSA (Emotional Based School Refusal)**

If poor attendance has been identified due to the child suffering from mental health issues including anxiety, the school will activate support for the child and family following the Lincolnshire EBSA Ladder and use the ATTEND Framework to support underlying reasons behind the child's reluctance to attend school or leave home. This will comprise of a graduated approach of support starting with a Plan, with support from the Lincolnshire Local Authority and local NHS services.



## **Q) Reduced Timetables**

All pupils are entitled to a full-time education; however there may be circumstances, for which a temporary reduced timetable may be considered appropriate for the child. The school follows the Lincolnshire guidance on reduced timetables.

## **R) Flexi- Schooling**

Flexi-schooling is an approach where the education is provided both at home and at school. It is not elective home education as the child is on the school roll. This is an arrangement between the parents and the school and the school have a right to refuse a request for a child to be flexi-schooled. Guidance is available from LCC should a parent request a Flexi-Schooling approach or further information.

Points to consider:

- a flexi-school arrangement is a formal arrangement and an agreement needs to be created that documents the roles and responsibilities of both the parents and the school. It should be reviewed initially every 6 weeks.
- a child who is flexi-schooled remains on the roll of a school therefore the days they are not in school are considered as authorised absences. Whilst school may be concerned about this, Ofsted have recognised flex-learning as an acceptable reason for absence.
- Flexi-schooling must be C coded and not B coded.

## **S) Elective Home Education**

To electively home educate a child, parents must inform the school of their decision after which the school will remove their child from roll and inform the local authority that the child's learning is now being arranged by the parents. Note that if the child is on roll at a special school then the local authority must give permission for the child to be electively home educated to ensure that the specific needs can still be met outside the school environment. It is the parent's choice to elect to home educate and the school must not be seen to persuade them in their decision either way. However, it is important that parents are given full information about elective home education, and particularly, how it may differ to what they have been experiencing over the last few months during school closure.

Key points to consider are:

- a child who is home educated does not remain on the school roll and therefore will not get access to the resources that schools may have provided during lockdown, including any digital devices.
- the parent is responsible for providing a suitable education and will be asked to provide evidence of this.
- should a parent decide that they no longer wish to home educate, there is no guarantee that they will be able to return to the original school as there may not be a school place available. Parents should not be threatened with this, but be made aware of the difficulties that the school may have in offering a return.

Whilst home education can be the right approach and very rewarding for some children, there is a risk that it may be chosen for the wrong reasons. It is therefore important to, if possible, invite parents to a meeting to discuss alternative options of how the school can support their child. DfE advice is to also to offer this meeting or a separate one with an officer from the local authority. This can be arranged by emailing [EHE@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:EHE@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

If parents wish to pursue the home education route, the school must complete the Elective Home Education notification survey. The link to this survey is <https://snaps.lincolnshire.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=159903791844> . It is important that schools inform any other agencies involved with the child, of the parent's decision to go EHE, especially if the child was deemed as vulnerable and the level of contact was low.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition there are specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff:

### **Headteacher:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to Governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence

### **Assistant Headteacher (Lead Behaviour Professional):**

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the Headteacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with EWO.
- To direct Pupil Premium funding to support attendance, where this becomes a barrier to reaching potential for those children in vulnerable groups.

### **Pastoral Support Assistant (from January 2021):**

- To monitor daily attendance of persistent absentees, vulnerable families and children for whom welfare is a concern.
- To take relevant actions to support such attendance into School of these groups in accordance with the Procedure,
- Following up and carrying out the attendance cycle in Appendix 1 which includes but is not limited to contacting parents, working with children, establishing and removing barriers, planning, target setting and enforcement.

### **Teachers:**

- To report attendance issues and discussions with parents regarding attendance to the administration staff and LBP.

- To hold initial discussions with parents about attendance concerns, look for solutions where possible, and signpost support and services where necessary.
- To provide catch-up work and ongoing support for the pupil to be educated at home in the case of long term authorised absence and known medical conditions that impact on regular attendance. (The School will not support holidays taken during term time by providing homework.)

### **Governors:**

Governors may become actively involved in monitoring attendance in the School in any or all of the following ways:

- By being given a specific role in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- By representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- By requesting regular attendance progress reports for Local Governing Body meetings.

### **Education Welfare Service/Education Inclusion Service - Lincolnshire County Council:**

The EWS can assist the School in improving attendance by:

- Liaising with identified school staff.
- Undertaking home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Working with identified groups of pupils.
- Instigating legal proceedings on behalf of the LEA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- Accepting referrals that meet the EWS referral criteria, initiating contact with parents or carers and undertaking assessments.
- Planning and reviewing casework.
- Providing feedback to schools.
- Offering strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing.
- Supporting schools and academies in the establishment and management of school attendance panels.
- Supporting schools and academies in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

### **Administrative Staff:**

Administrative staff will:

- Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly attendance percentage information.
- Maintain registers with updated absence information.
- Maintain pupil signing-in/out books for when pupils arrive after registers have closed and/or for when pupils leave before the end of the school day.

## 7 LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Other agencies may be used where appropriate in individual cases:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police.

### Appendix 1.1

#### Policies & Procedures Informing This Policy

##### *Parents Statutory Duties regarding Behaviour & Attendance*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/581539/School\\_attendance\\_parental\\_responsibility\\_measures\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf)

##### *Additional More Recent Advice*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907535/School\\_attendance\\_guidance\\_for\\_2020\\_to\\_2021\\_academic\\_year.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

##### *Lincolnshire Guidance On Attendance*

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-attendance>

## APPENDIX 1.2

### Attendance Cycle - Pupils Less Than 95%

