

St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

Approved: July 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027

Our school

Mission Statement

St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where our pupils will want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Aims

To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.

To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.

To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Attendance Targets:

To keep whole school attendance above 97%.

Everyone – including children, parents and carers, all school staff, school governors, Local Authority, external agencies – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. We are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies to achieve best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available.

We believe that ours is a successful, welcoming school which you and your child/(ren) plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to achieve excellence.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our children are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Regular attendance is so important as it gives your child the best opportunity to learn. Any absences will affect the pattern of your child's schooling and consistent absences may seriously affect learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines, not only for your child but for others in the same class.

The school liaises closely with our Local Authority and other agencies using an Early Help pathway (Early Help Referral) which assists in the assessment of need in order for appropriate support to be given. This initial pathway enables further referrals to external agencies to be made and further support acquired to support families to remove any barriers that are preventing regular attendance.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Definition of a parent/carers in Education Law

It's important that schools and local authorities are aware that parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

For the purposes of education law, the department considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative.
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

The Law relating to attendance and the right to a full-time education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process.

In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code C2).

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

It is the legal responsibility of **every** parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an **additional legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The school rules are determined by the school and are the days and hours that they are open for pupils to attend. Under this judgment all children registered at a school should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – Working together to improve School Attendance – September 2024 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is **everyone's responsibility** and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

Attendance	Anti-Bullying
Behaviour Management	Access to the Curriculum
Health and Safety	Wellbeing

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Creating and maintaining a pattern of punctual and regular attendance is **everybody's** responsibility – parents/carers, pupils, school staff and, external agencies.

Reception Intake Induction period

Peterborough City Council in line with the Admissions Code, offer all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full-time place at school if requested by their parents/carers.

Our School uses a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education using a reduced timetable and to assist in their transition to full-time education. You will be notified of the timetable for our Reception children for September in advance.

At our school all children are expected to be in school before the end of registration so that they are settled and ready to start the school day.

Expectations and Daily routines

Our day school starts at 8.45am and we expect all children to be in class by this time. Registers are marked at 8.45am, pupils will be marked as late after this time. Registration closes at 9:15am.

Your child will receive an unauthorised late mark if they arrive after the register is closed. Your child will be given a 'U' code (unauthorised late) in line with regulations, and this may mean that you face legal action if they persist. When your child is late, they miss the start of the day, they can miss work, and this will impact on their learning. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons for other pupils in the class, which is not fair on them or your child.

Absence Procedure

If your child is going to be absent from school, you must contact the school before 9:00 am on the first day and subsequent days of absence and inform the school the reason for the absence (unless it is a diagnosed medical condition and evidence is on file). You can do this several ways:

- telephone,
- text
- email
- Calling into the school and speaking to a staff member

If your child is absent and you do not contact us, we will, under our safeguarding policy:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day and every following day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Contact emergency numbers held on our database
- Undertake a home visit if no contact is received from you Invite you in to discuss the situation with us
- Call 101 (Police) and request a safe and well check if all other attempts to contact you fail to get a response
- Invite you to discuss the absences with us
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of penalty notices issued to each parent/carers for each child or legal action through the courts.

Communication with Parents and Carers

Who to contact if you or your child/children have questions or concerns about attendance?

- Day-to-day – speak to the class teacher.
- Contact Mrs Lopez or Mrs Jordan to discuss your child's absence.
- More detailed support – speak to the Headteacher

Our school follows the principles outlined in the Department for Education's **A Guide for Schools on Communicating with Parents about Attendance**. Throughout the year, particularly at the beginning and end of each term, during periods of winter illness and at parents' evenings, we will communicate clear and timely information about attendance expectations, each child's attendance and the support available. Parents and carers are expected to read and respond to attendance communications and to contact the school promptly if difficulties arise.

Open, respectful communication enables us to work in partnership, address barriers early and ensure every child benefits from regular attendance, including learning, friendships, confidence and a strong sense of belonging.

Data and Monitoring

How we monitor attendance/absence

We keep track all our children's attendance and absences thoroughly through regular reports from our Management Information System – Horizons and these information is saved in Teams. We look at the reports on a regular basis to track any concerns that may arise due to unauthorised absences and to ensure that any interventions are timely and appropriate.

We routinely monitor attendance and absences daily, weekly, half termly, termly and annually to assist the school in providing support and/or changes to our process where necessary to provide the correct support to families.

We analyse all patterns of absence, both authorised and unauthorised and try to ensure that parents/carers are informed of any child's attendance that fails below the National Average 97% to prevent your child becoming a persistent absentee (PA) which means that they have an attendance below 90%. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parent/carer support and co-operation to tackle this.

Our interventions at this stage may include, but is not limited to:

- Writing or emailing to parents/carers if attendance drops below the school's threshold of 95%.
- requesting that they provide evidence to support absences
- calling a School Attendance Meeting
- making an Early Help Referral
- referring to the Local Authority for support

PA pupils are also tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is essential, preferably in writing so that it can be recorded correctly.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an exceptional circumstance such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other exceptional cause authorised by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. These include, but are not limited to:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, acting as interpreters or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance
- medical treatment overseas (unless part of emergency treatment whilst abroad on an authorised absence).

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** an option to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Impact analysis

As part of our data analysis and monitoring process, **both authorised and unauthorised absence will have an impact on your child's record of absence.** We will regularly assess the outcomes of our support/interventions to measure the impact that they are having on the improvement of children's attendance and attainment. We will continue to meet with and engage with families to find out and help resolve any barriers to regular attendance, including signposting or referring to other agencies. We will regular review cases to ensure that the school is providing the appropriate support/referrals as legal action, for our school is a last resort, but sometimes cannot be avoided.

Legal Interventions

Fixed penalty notices

The headteacher may request a fixed penalty notice to be issued by the Local Authority in line with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for unauthorised leave of absence or where all support interventions do not secure an improvement in attendance.

A penalty notice may be issued if **one** of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10 sessions(usually equivalent to 5 school days)** or more within a minimum period of any 10 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-years, the Attendance Team may instead choose to prosecute a parent under the Education Act 1996 s444.)
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10% or above (registers should be closed after a period of time agreed by the school but no more than 30 minutes after they have opened. We recommend that this should be no more than 20 minutes)**

Leave of absence/single absence event

As a school we ask parents/carers **not** to take children out of school without the permission of the headteacher as per the Law and Legislation. Please remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Headteacher's must comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday, attend a sporting or family event.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in writing at least four weeks in advance a 'leave of absence request form' needs to be completed, this can be collected and returned to the main office, we can't accept emails or verbal request for time off from school.

In deciding about whether to authorise the leave the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually considering the evidence submitted in support.

If the request is refused the Headteacher will inform all parties of their decision.

If the Headteacher grants the request it is for the Headteacher to **determine** the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**. It is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

Absence due to Non School Attendance (Irregular/Persistent Absenteeism)

Where the school has implemented attendance interventions and parent/carers have failed to support the school, the school may request a penalty notice under the Peterborough City Council, Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

A penalty notice may be issued if **one** of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10 sessions(usually equivalent to 5 school days)** or more within a minimum period of any 10 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-years, the Attendance Team may instead choose to prosecute a parent under the Education Act 1996 s444.)
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10% or above (registers should be closed after a period of time agreed by the school but no more than 30 minutes after they have opened. We recommend that this should be no more than 20 minutes)**
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website

Escalation of Procedures

When we escalate cases to higher level legal interventions

The school will make every effort to support families/children whose attendance is causing concern. However, there are some circumstances where despite the school's, the Local Authority's and extended work through multiple agencies fails to improve the attendance of children and at this point the school may instigate, or request that the Local Authority instigates a more formal legal intervention.

If this occurs a case may be prepared and presented to the Magistrates Court for prosecution under Section 444 (1) or 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

The outcome of these cases will be determined by the courts, of which can be:

- where convicted under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- where convicted under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.
- Impose a Parenting Order

Incentives and Rewards

How our school is **promoting** and incentivising good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Having a whole school approach to attendance
- Provide details on attendance in our regular newsletters
- Report to you regularly on how your child/children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress
- Update you at parent/carers evenings'
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through weekly, half term and term events.
- Through assemblies and displays throughout the school.
- Pupil will receive 100% certificate at the end of the year if they achieve full attendance.

Our monitoring/intervention strategy

Below is the basis of our intervention pathway. We treat each child individually and therefore each case may take a different route depending on the barriers, needs of the family and any other circumstances which may be impacting on regular attendance. We try to take a holistic approach to dealing with and resolving barriers to non-school attendance and use legal interventions as a last resort.

97.5 - 100%

Attendance levels are good to excellent

Positive encouragement/incentives/rewards offered to encourage and maintain high attendance. If the absences are unauthorised, we may write to you. Monitoring continues.

97.5% = 1
week (5 days)
missed school

95% - 97.4%

Attendance levels start to cause concern

The school analyses data and creates reports to regularly monitor attendance. If your child's attendance starts to fall the school may write to you expressing concerns and may advise that further absences will not be authorised without medical evidence. Monitoring continues. If the absences are unauthorised we may invite you to a meeting to discuss the barriers to your child's attendance and formulate an agreed course of action to support a return to regular attendance. Monitoring continues to assess impact of any agreed support or actions.

95% = 2 weeks
(10 days) missed
school

92.5 - 94.9%

Attendance levels causing further significant concern.

At this point you will be invited to a meeting at the school and a plan of action offered. A Home School Agreement will be created to support an improvement in attendance. Your child will be monitored to ensure that there is an improvement in the coming weeks. You will be required to provide evidence to support absences and if none are received the absences will be recorded as unauthorised. You may be issued with a Final Warning Letter. Close monitoring is put in place to assess impact on attendance of any agreed support or actions.

92.5% = 2
weeks 4 days
(14 days)
missed school

90 - 92.4%

Attendance levels do not improve, and further unauthorised absences are recorded

You may be issued with a Final Warning Letter or sent a further absence letter notifying you of a request to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice. Attendance will continue to be monitored and further interventions may be put in place.

90% = 3 weeks
4 days (19)
days missed
school

85 - 89.9%

Attendance levels do not improve, and further concerns are raised.

Below 90% means that your child is classed as a persistent absentee and further interventions may be instigated through legal routes if all other support has proved ineffective in improving attendance or there is lack of engagement by parents/carers. This may be with the use of a penalty notice or referral under Section 444 (1) (1a) for a legal meeting or an interview under caution. Monitoring continues.

85% = 5 weeks 4
days (29) days
missed school
HALF A TERM

Expectations of the Governing Body

Our governing body will have high expectations for attendance at our school. It is their role to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure that our school leaders fulfil their expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge and help to focus our improvement efforts where needed most
- Ensure all our school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

References

- The Education Act 1996, 2002 & 2011
- Working together to improve school attendance (Guidance) May 2022, August 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018, 2023
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, 2024
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, 2012 & 2013, 2024
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance DFE 2026

People with overall attendance responsibility in our school

Name	Role
Mr. Cooper	Headteacher
Ms L White	Chair of governors
Mrs. Lopez	Assistant Headteacher
Mrs Jordan	Attendance Lead