

# CARDINAL POLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL



## Student Attendance Policy

Approved  
by  
Governors

Signed:

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## **Mission Statement**

Cardinal Pole Catholic School is a learning community for all based upon partnership and respect. It is a strong and vibrant place which recognizes the importance and individual needs of every pupil and member of staff. Praise and encouragement is vital in creating a climate of learning and high expectations supported by teaching of the highest quality. The school is full of confident, creative and fulfilled young people and staff. They are celebrated as individuals – unique creations of God – who deserve our support, love and trust as they begin the great journey of life.

## **1. Aims**

Cardinal Pole Catholic School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Research has unequivocally demonstrated that good attendance is essential to successful academic performance in schools. That is why we define regular attendance is being at least **96%** attendance.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

## **3. School procedures**

### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.35am and will be kept open until 9.05am The register for the second session will be taken at 3.15pm and will be kept open until 3.30pm, except on Mondays when the register for the second session will be taken at 2.25pm and will be kept open until 2.40pm.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.35pm or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents must notify the school by ringing the school on 0208 9855150 and leaving a message on the school absence line. Alternatively, parents can message the school via the MyEd app.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parent must notify the school in advance by either:

- Ringing the school on 0208 9855150 and leaving a message for the School Attendance Officer
- Notifying the school via the MyEd app
- Notifying the school in person via the main office

Parents should note that in all cases of medical or dental appointments, evidence of the appointment (letter or appointment card) will be required. Handwritten notes (in student planners or otherwise) will not be accepted. In the case of telephone or MyEd notification, evidence of the appointment must be provided prior to the appointment date.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorize such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Punctuality and Late Detentions**

The following arrangements will apply to pupils who are late to school:

- A pupil who arrives to school after the gate has closed at 8.30am will be marked as late to school (L code)
- A pupil who arrives to school after 9.05am will be marked as arriving after registration closed (U code)
- In the case of pupils who arrive to school late but have a valid reason (medical or dental appointments or emergency of some kind), the parent must notify the school attendance officer of the reason for the lateness via the school office on 0208 9855150 as soon as possible.
- Pupils who arrive to school late (without a valid reason) will have a 30-minute detention after school the same day.
- Pupils who are late to school twice in the same week will have a detention on the Friday of the following week until 5.30pm. Parents will be notified of such a detention at least 24 hours beforehand.

- Handwritten notes explaining why a pupil is late will not be accepted. The School Attendance Officer must be notified by calling 0208 9855150 and leaving a message.
- Note that traffic and/or transport problems and failing to wake up on time are not acceptable reasons for being late to school.

In addition to the above, the following staged sanctions will apply to deal with punctuality issues:

STUDENTS WITH...	ACTION
5 or more lates	Level 1 Warning Letter and Headteacher's Detention.
10 or more lates	Level 2 Warning Letter and Saturday Detention.
15 or more lates	Level 3 Warning Letter and further sanction and/or intervention as determined by school.

### 3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. In the case of unauthorised absence, parents will be contacted by text message and the MyEd app no later than 11.00am if their child is not in school and a reason has not been provided. Parents must then contact the school immediately and provide the reason for absence. Parents who fail to respond to such a message may be referred to the School Attendance Officer, the child's Pastoral Team and/or Hackney Children's Services for follow up.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will be provided with an attendance report for their child at scheduled Parents' Evenings. Parents can also check their child's attendance any time via Go 4 Schools and/or upon request from their child's Pastoral Team.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as death or serious illness of a close family relative.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

**Authorised absence** can include the following:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

**Unauthorised absence** can include the following:

- Absence for medical reasons that has not been sufficiently evidenced
- Taking any form of holiday during term time
- Absence for the purpose of visiting relatives who are ill and/or are abroad
- Absence for the purpose of caring for a relative

Please bear in mind that the above examples are neither exhaustive nor definitive.

## 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The member of SLT responsible for attendance, working closely with the School Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer will see to promote good attendance by:

- Putting a range of interventions in place to improve the attendance of individual pupils as well as targeted groups
- Ensuring that minimum attendance and punctuality targets are included as criteria for inclusion in school reward trips
- Producing regular attendance data and reports for staff and Governors so that effective monitoring scrutiny of attendance can take place at all levels within the school
- Liaising with pastoral teams to identify causes of concern and plan interventions and support
- Putting aspirational and achievable whole school attendance targets in place

In addition to the above, the following incentives will apply to promote good attendance:

<b>100% attendance</b>	=	<b>Letter and certificate of excellent attendance</b>
<b>98/99% attendance</b>	=	<b>Letter and certificate of good attendance</b>

## 6. Attendance monitoring and Persistent Absence

The School Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis and meets with the member of SLT responsible for attendance weekly. The School Attendance Officer meets with the Education Welfare Officer every fortnight.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above three days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If, after contacting parents, a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the Education Welfare Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, the following actions may be taken:

- **Referral to Education Welfare Officer**
- **Warning letter**
- **Penalty notice (currently £60)**

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school monitors attendance data proactively and produces at least three reports a year for Governors and SLT. A weekly Attendance Tracker is also produced and shared with SLT. In addition, weekly attendance data broken down by form group is made available to the whole school.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The Governing Board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 SLT with responsibility for attendance**

The member of SLT with responsibility for attendance:

- Works with the School Attendance Officer and EWO to monitor attendance concerns and take appropriate action when required
- Produces regular attendance reports for the Headteacher and Governing Board
- Devises, implements and monitors strategies and interventions to improve attendance across all groups

### **7.4 The School Attendance Officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT Member responsible for Attendance and to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Reports any safeguarding concerns that arise to the DSL
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **7.5 The Education Welfare Officer**

The Education Welfare Officer is based at Hackney Learning Trust and will:

- Administer warnings and fines for pupils whose attendance is a concern and has met threshold for such warnings and fines
- Contact parents as directed by the School Attendance Officer
- Other administrative tasks as directed by the school

### **7.6 Pastoral Teams**

Pastoral teams, comprising the Head of Year and Pastoral Support Manager, will monitor the attendance of their year groups and will:

- Chase up unexplained absences weekly
- Alert the Attendance Team if there are attendance or punctuality concerns
- Contact parents as directed by the Attendance Team to discuss attendance or punctuality issues

### **7.7 Classroom Teachers/Form Tutors**

Classroom teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis on SIMS, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. In the event of technical issues with SIMS, paper registers must be taken.

### **7.8 Office/reception staff**

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and pass on to the School Attendance Officer to record it on the school system.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the member of SLT with responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day