

Attendance Policy

Cardinal Newman Catholic High School



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY



CARDINAL
NEWMAN
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Approved by:

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1. Aims

Our 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.

At Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping students achieve the best that they can be. Education is important. Students should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. All research shows that students who attend well achieve well.

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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students 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 student 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.

Students must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am until 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.55pm until 2.00pm.

Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the school website which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school. If your child tells you that school is to be closed on a day not indicated on the school calendar, please check by telephoning the school.

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 8.45 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents need contact school by telephone, email or text.

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 student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. We do appreciate that it is often difficult for parents / carers to obtain written confirmation of medical appointments. Parents / carers can obtain 'Medical Authorisation Cards' from school to take with them to the doctors to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment. (see below) Parents / carers must ensure the card is stamped, dated, and signed by the practice to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment.

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

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

Students who arrive after registration must sign in at Reception. Failure to sign in can lead to consequences being issued. If you are aware your child will be arriving late, please send him/her with a note explaining the circumstances or contact the school by telephone, i.e. - unplanned appointment at the doctors.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

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. Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an offence if their child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received, we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers/email address and home address. In cases where we continue to be concerned, we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' visit. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school. Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will receive a copy of their child's attendance when reports are sent home. Students get a half termly update of their attendance which is recorded in their planner. Any student whose attendance is cause for concern will be contacted by the Pastoral manager responsible for attendance to offer support and advice to improve the students attendance wherever possible.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

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

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.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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

4.2 Legal sanctions

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Students with attendance below 90% may fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised. According to the DFE guidance (March 2013); 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority'. In addition 'Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)'

When a student's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) he/she will meet with the school's Attendance Officer and home will be contacted. The school will follow the guidelines if a student has 20 sessions (10 days) or more unauthorised absence in a 12-month period. In this eventuality both parents, even if one of the parents does not live with the student, will be invited into school to attend a 'School Attendance Review Meeting'. The student's attendance will be monitored for a four-week period. If the student attends school every day during this period parents they will meet with the attendance officer who will comment on the improvement. If the student is absent from school during this monitoring period parents will be expected to provide medical evidence (i.e. – medical appointment cards, copy of prescription, letters concerning hospital appointments, letters from professional organisations (CAMHS), print screen of medical notes, doctor's medical certificate).

If there continues to be no improvement in attendance and absences remain unauthorised, the school and the LA will complete the prosecution paperwork and begin to undertake the necessary legal action against the parents. This will initially result in a Fast Track Prosecution. Failure to pay the Fine will result in further legal action.

Following the Fast Track to prosecution, where there is still no improvement in the students attendance this could lead to an Aggravated Fast Track Prosecution which will result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months in prison (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an Education Supervision Order (ESO) and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly. The Local Authority may use an ESO as an interim measure before moving directly to prosecution. Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a Parenting Order. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling.

If unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent/s but previous parental failure to engage with the school and local authority can be cited. If a fine is issued by the court, the school will be required to continue to monitor the student's attendance and begin the process again if the student has a further 20 sessions (10 days) unauthorised absence from the date the fine was issued by the court. This may result in further legal action taken against the parent if the student continues to have periods of unauthorised absence from school.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Cardinal Newman recognizes the importance of celebrating good attendance and motivating all students to improve their attendance. A number of initiatives and rewards events take place throughout the academic year these include, Achievement points for good attendance and punctuality are added each half term , students with the highest points are then added to the big Prize Draw which takes place each term, 100% attendance certificates, termly ad end of year rewards events.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Pastoral Managers monitor student absence on a daily basis and HOY weekly.

Parents are expected to contact school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). they must inform school every day their child is absent

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the education welfare officer from the LA that works closely with the school.

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.

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 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance daily at morning and afternoon registration, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class teacher must record attendance each lesson using lesson monitor on SIMs

7.5 Office/reception staff

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

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the head teacher. 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