



*Shining as we learn in
Faith, Family and Friendship!*

St William of York Catholic Primary School

2026-2027 Attendance Policy

Together, as God's family we are learning through love, forgiveness, respect and compassion to use our unique gifts, challenging and transforming our world.

At St William of York Catholic Primary School, we believe: -

- That children can only learn effectively and reach their full potential if they attend school regularly.
- That children must arrive on time.
- That children should not be at school if they are unwell (this does not include colds, but vomiting, diarrhoea, contagious diseases and flu)

Good attendance means that children usually make good, consistent progress in their school work. We expect good attendance from our pupils, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents and carers to ensure that this is achieved.

We would ask parents and carers to help the school by notifying us of all absences on the first day by telephone or calling in to the school office by 9.30am. If no message is received during the morning of the first day of absence, we will contact the child's parents by text at 9.30am. We will often follow this up with a phone call and a home visit, particularly where we have concerns around attendance.

If no contact is made absence and amended to 'O' – Unauthorised. If a response is made via phone or text the appropriate code is entered e.g. 'I' – Illness, 'C' – Other authorised circumstances or may remain as 'O' with a comment recorded on SIMS. We use our knowledge of families to make an informed decision and we visit home where deemed necessary. If appropriate we will contact the Early Intervention Service and request a home visit.

The School Day.

Doors will open at 8:30am for a "soft start" to the day. These will be closed when the school day starts at 8.40am. Pupils who are not present for registration will be marked as 'N' – No reason yet provided for absence. When a reason is provided, the appropriate code will be entered. Pupils arriving after 8.40am should enter school via the main entrance and be signed in at the office. Children who arrive before the registers close at 8.50am will be marked as 'L' – Late before

registers close. Children who arrive after the registers have closed will be marked as 'U' – Late after registers close, which is an unauthorised absence.

Holidays during school time.

Taking a child out of school during term time to go on holiday disrupts their education. In September 2024, the government issued new guidance, instructing Headteachers that they can no longer authorise absences in term time for family holidays. Absences should only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher has the final decision on whether to authorise absence from school.

Points to note:

- There is no entitlement for parents to remove their child from school for the purposes of a holiday in term time.
- All such requests must be made on the school's 'Request for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances' Form'.
- The form must be returned to the school office at least one month before the start date of the holiday.
- Parents should not assume that returning the form guarantees that the absence request will be approved.
- The Headteacher will inform parents whether or not the absence has been approved.
- In signing the form, parents are confirming that they understand the following:
 - If a child is removed for a family holiday without approval, the absence will be marked as "unauthorised". Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) will lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.
 - Children who go on extended holidays will be taken off roll after four weeks and their place will be offered to children on the school waiting list.

Medical Appointments

Doctor or Dental appointments should be made outside the times of the school day. It is appreciated that Hospital/Orthodontic appointments may occur during the school day. Evidence should be provided of all appointments and if registration is missed children will be marked as 'M' – Medical, which is classed as an authorised absence. Pupils should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Concerns and support

Parents whose child/ren's attendance is below 90% for the academic year after each half term may be invited in for a meeting to discuss how school can further support to improve attendance. If there is concern over a child's attendance or persistent lateness the school may:

- Open an Early Help Initial Assessment and monitor the child's attendance through the Early Help process. If there is concern over a child's attendance or persistent lateness the school may:
- Inform the Early Intervention Service who may carry out a home visit.
- Invite Parents to an Attendance Panel Meeting to discuss how we can work together to improve attendance

The Senior Support Worker from the Early Intervention Service is available for advice and support when children are causing serious concerns.

Children at risk of missing education

To ensure that there is always an additional responsible adult to contact when a pupil is missing school or if there is a welfare/safeguarding concern every pupil's record should have emergency contact details for more than one person.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- St William's will offer an environment where pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos is that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow-up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly analysed.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will, when appropriate, have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body about attendance

Rewards and Incentives

Every week, classes with the highest attendance will earn an additional play time. Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance for every term.

School Target

The school strives to attain 100% each day. We recognise, however, that this may not always be possible for many genuine reasons. We, therefore, aim to reach the target of 96%. This is a minimum expectation and one that the school, with partnership from parents and carers, expects to achieve annually.

Penalty Notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. The national threshold for considering whether a penalty notice has been met is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice.

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

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice.

In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The headteacher, parents, class teacher and SENCO will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate, the child's views will also be gathered. An attendance contract may be put in place to support progress towards improved attendance.

School-based interventions may be offered: a consultation with Primary Behaviour Support, a time-limited part-time timetable so the child can build success or support through our Caritas counselling service. External Interventions may be offered, such as a referral to Primary Behaviour Support or to CAMHS. A home-school book will be established to maintain clear communication between the parents and the class staff.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The headteacher, parents, class teacher and SENCO will meet to identify the barriers to good school attendance. If appropriate, the child's views will also be gathered. If appropriate, the attendance policy will be implemented.

School will identify a key adult to work with the child and the family to explore the positive and negative influences on absenteeism and build resilience.

School-based interventions may be offered: a consultation with Primary Behaviour Support, a time-limited part-time timetable so the child can build success or support through our Caritas counselling service.

External Interventions may be offered, such as a referral to Primary Behaviour Support or to CAMHS. A home-school book will be established to maintain clear communication between the parents and the class staff.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data will be 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. The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- (1) analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and;
- (2) identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.

Our attendance lead will conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends. Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent
- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils.

Miss E Turner (Attendance Lead) Autumn 2026

Reviewed by Governors on: Autumn 2026

Signed by Chair of Curriculum, Pupil Safety and Inclusion Committee T. McGovern

Review Date: Autumn 2027