



**Xavier Catholic Education Trust
Attendance Policy**

**This policy has been approved and adopted by the Xavier Catholic Education Trust
in October 2023 and will be reviewed in November 2024.**

Committee Responsible: Audit and Risk Committee

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1. Aims

The Xavier Trust is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons – or insert a school statement on how you wish to approach attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#) □ Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

3.2 The Local Governing Committee

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Regularly reviewing and challenging school level attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

3.3 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies □ Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Emily Fanzo and can be contacted via head@marist.surrey.sch.uk

3.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Head of School.
- Working with Surrey Attendance Advice & Support Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Jean Morreale and can be contacted via office@marist.surrey.sch.uk

3.6 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Arbor.

3.7 School office staff School

office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Head of School or class teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.8 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Provide the school with a minimum of 4 emergency contact numbers for their child Notify the school immediately of any change to contact details.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55 am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken 1.00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before 8.55am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Parents should ensure that they contact the school via the absence line (01932 339150) by 8.55 am **every day** of the absence, for safeguarding reasons, providing **full details** of the reason for non-attendance, as it is no longer satisfactory to provide the reason(s) as 'illness' or 'unwell'. Providing this is done, you will no longer need to send in written confirmation.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in writing of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school and by whom.

Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- It is essential that pupils arrive to school on time. Pupil's achievement is directly influenced by attendance and punctuality and suffers when attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. The Marist Catholic Primary School aims to encourage all pupils to achieve their potential through regular attendance and punctuality.
- Parents are encouraged to get their children to school for 8.40am, when the gates open.
- Registers are taken at 8.55am. Any child arriving between then and 9.25am will be marked as late (L).
 - Registers close at 9.25 am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence
 - (U) - late after close of register, which counts as a statistical absence, or coded accordingly dependent on the reason for the late arrival.
- Children and parents will not be permitted to enter the playground after 8.55am, after this time parents will need to drop their children off at the school office and record their child's name in the late book, in case of a fire drill.
- Poor attendance and punctuality is monitored and followed up swiftly.
- Teachers and office staff will inform the Head of School of any concerns that they may have regarding children who are often late.
- If a pupil is late on 5 consecutive occasions in a half-term, then the parents will be invited to meet with the Head of School or Deputy to discuss the issues surrounding their child's punctuality.
- If lateness persists then the Surrey Attendance Advice & Support Officer may become involved.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call the Surrey Attendance Advice & Support Officer, Children's Services or the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Surrey Attendance Advice Support Officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via reports and on request.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least a week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the request term time absence on the website. The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Genuine illness
- Genuine family crisis
- Unavoidable cause
- Other cause (as judged reasonable by the Head of School)

5.2 Legal sanctions

Penalty Notices

In accordance with Government Regulations, the Surrey Attendance Advice & Support Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head of School is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head of School, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. This includes absences and late arrival to school after the close of registration without good reason. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, a Penalty Notice warning letter will be sent to parents by the Surrey Attendance Advice & Support Officer informing them that if their child incurs further unauthorised absences during the following 15 school days monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Surrey Attendance Advice & Support Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is RAG rated on children's reports.

There is an annual school prize for attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

• 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

• The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

The attendance officer will identify children who are frequently late or absent.

A letter will be sent in the first instance.

Should attendance not improve, a second letter is sent with a request to meet with the Head of School and a suggestion that the Surrey Attendance Advice & Support service are involved.

During the meeting with the Head of School, reasons for non-attendance will be discussed and solutions offered may include use of Extended School, offer of before school clubs, use of staff car park, ELSA support.

The attendance officer will liaise with the Head of School in decisions about authorised and unauthorised absence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DFE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by Xavier COO. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Trustee Board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour 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