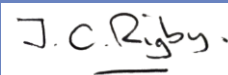


Attendance Policy

Date approved:
Signed by Chair of Governors: Mr Jon Rigby



Date approved:
Signed by Headteacher: Mrs Kate Pereira



Reviewed: May 2025
Next Review: May 2027



St John Fisher
Catholic High School

Policy and Procedures

Attendance Policy

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"

John Chapter 10

Introduction

St John Fisher Catholic High School believes in the fundamental right of the student to be educated to his or her full potential and to participate fully in the life of the school community.

The school is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on 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.

The whole school community – students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

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 students 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.

Attendance Champion and Leader

A member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. In addition, the school follows local authority protocol in assigning an Attendance Champion. This member of staff is a designated senior leader within the school who is responsible for leading, championing and improving school attendance.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class. Every student has a target of 100% for 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.

Safeguarding:

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
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;
- The Law relating to attendance:

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

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- 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 or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to Peterborough City Council Attendance Service 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 better 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. Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Local Authority policies via the relevant Medical Need Service. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

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

All PA, or potential PA cases are automatically referred to our link Peterborough City Council Attendance Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible by telephoning 01733 343646 on each day of absence and giving a reason for the absence;
- Use Schoolcomms to update us on the reasons for absence.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will take a message for you
- If your child is absent from school then medical evidence may need to be provided.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on each day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- Refer the matter to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service if attendance falls below 95%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Peterborough City Council Attendance Service, Bayard Place, Peterborough.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their Form Tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Sanctions will be issued for lateness to school unless there are extenuating circumstances.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:35am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

The school gates are closed at **8:35am** and your child will receive a late mark and an after school detention if they are not in by that time and do not have a valid reason for being late.

At **9:15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence:

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstances in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

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.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence.

It is important that you understand that we will **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

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 (in accordance with Appendix 6 of the PCC Attendance Policy).

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Jason Cowlin – Student Support Officer, Beverley House
Angelina Renda – Student Support Officer, Cambridge House
Karen D'Ambrosio – Student Support Officer, Rochester House
Lucy Dousse – Student support Officer, Westminster House
Sue Hostead – Administration Assistant
James Bates – Assistant Headteacher

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Chair of Governors:

Date of Policy: Updated June 2025

Review: May 2027

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at St John Fisher Catholic High School.

Signed:

Child's Name: Class/Form: