FEDERATION OF ST ANNE'S AND ST MARTIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

St Anne's and St Martins

Learning to live by faith and to be known by love

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

2026–2027

Policy management	Details
Policy owner	Executive Headteacher
Approved by	Full Governing Board (FGB)
Academic year	2026–2027
Date approved	September 2026
Date published	September 2026
Next review	September 2027, or earlier if statutory guidance changes
Review cycle	Annual
Policy type	Non-statutory school policy reflecting statutory duties and guidance
Template/source	Based on The Key attendance policy structure and the federation's 2026 school policies; updated for current DfE statutory guidance

Key updates for 2026–2027

- Updated to reflect the Department for Education's Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance, last updated 9 July 2026. The July 2026 changes are technical clarifications rather than a change of policy.
- One consistent federation approach for St Anne's and St Martin's, while retaining each school's different start times, register arrangements and contact details.
- Clearer expectations for early identification, supportive conversations with families, attendance plans/contracts, reintegration and reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, medical needs or other complex barriers.
- Continued use of the national penalty notice framework: the national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks; first notice £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 within 28 days; second notice within 3 years £160; a third notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within 3 years.
- Electronic registers and the national attendance and absence codes remain mandatory. Attendance data is shared securely with the DfE and local authority in line with statutory requirements.
- Persistent absence remains 10% or more of sessions missed; severe absence remains 50% or more. These pupils, and those at risk of reaching these thresholds, are prioritised for support.

1. Aims and Federation ethos

Regular attendance is essential to safeguarding, achievement, wellbeing and belonging. In our Catholic schools, every child is known, valued and supported to flourish. We therefore seek to understand the reasons for absence, remove barriers wherever possible and work in partnership with families, while maintaining high expectations for attendance and punctuality.

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promote the benefits of regular attendance and a strong sense of belonging.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil can access the full-time education to which they are entitled, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Act early when patterns of absence or lateness emerge.
- Build respectful, productive relationships with families and external partners to remove barriers to attendance.
- Ensure attendance practice is inclusive and considers safeguarding, SEND, disability, medical and mental health needs.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (last updated 9 July 2026), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the national framework for penalty notices. It should also be read alongside current school census guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Children Missing Education guidance and DfE guidance on mental health issues affecting attendance.

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996.
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002.
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the 2024 amendments.
- Equality Act 2010 and the school's duties to make reasonable adjustments.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

- Set high expectations for leaders, staff, pupils and parents and promote attendance across the federation's ethos and policies.
- Ensure statutory duties for registration, data sharing and partnership working are fulfilled.
- Review attendance information regularly, including whole-school, year-group and vulnerable-group patterns, and challenge leaders on impact.
- Ensure appropriate resources, training and support are in place, with particular attention to pupils who are persistently or severely absent.
- Hold the Executive Headteacher to account for implementation of this policy.

3.2 Executive Headteacher and senior leadership team

- Lead, champion and improve attendance across both schools.
- Monitor school-level and pupil-level attendance and punctuality and report to governors.

- Ensure effective systems are in place for first-day response, follow-up, analysis, support, escalation and safeguarding.
- Work with families to understand barriers and agree proportionate support, attendance plans, contracts or reintegration arrangements where appropriate.
- Work with the SENCO and parents to address SEND-related barriers and inform the local authority when attendance concerns relate to a pupil's EHC plan.
- Authorise leave of absence only in accordance with the regulations and consider requests for penalty notices or other legal intervention when appropriate.
- Ensure the local authority receives required notifications and information about admissions, deletions, irregular attendance and relevant sickness absence.

3.3 Class teachers

- Complete morning and afternoon registers accurately and promptly using the correct national codes.
- Promote attendance and punctuality positively and raise emerging concerns with the office or senior leaders.
- Support pupils returning after absence and contribute to reasonable adjustments or reintegration plans where needed.
- - raise concerns of impact of emerging attendance concerns to parents e.g. impact of missed learning. (ASW encourages this)
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3.4 Administrative staff / attendance administration

- Receive and record absence information from parents and carers.
- Follow up unexplained absence promptly and record the reason and correct code as soon as it is known.
- Ensure late arrivals are signed in and recorded accurately.
- Maintain accurate attendance records, support data analysis and complete required local authority processes.
- Where a school move is reported, confirm the pupil's onward destination and follow admission/CME procedures before deletion from roll.

3.5 Parents and carers

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open, on time, unless there is a lawful reason for absence.
- Report absence before 9.00am on the first day and on each subsequent day unless another arrangement has been agreed, giving the reason and expected return date.
- Provide more than one emergency contact number and keep contact details up to date.
- Arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible and minimise time out of school when appointments must take place during the day.
- Submit requests for leave of absence in advance and provide evidence where requested.
- Engage with school support, meetings, attendance plans/contracts and local authority services where attendance is a concern.

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend every day, arrive on time and engage positively with support designed to help them attend and participate in school.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 School day, registers and reporting absence

Arrangement	St Anne's / St Martin's
School day	St Anne's: 8.50am–3.25pm St Martin's: 8.45am–3.15pm
Expected arrival	St Anne's: by 8.50am St Martin's: by 8.45am
Morning register	St Anne's: taken at 8.50am; pupils arriving after gates close at 9.00am report to the office. Register closes St Martin's: taken at 8.45am; register remains open until 9.00am.
Absence notification	Parents should notify the relevant school before 9.00am.
St Anne's contact	0118 937 5537 | admin@st-annes.reading.sch.uk
St Martin's contact	0118 937 5544 | admin@stmartins.reading.sch.uk

The federation will keep an electronic attendance register and use the national attendance and absence codes. The register is taken at the start of the first session and once during the second session. Entries are retained for 6 years from the date they are made. Any amendment must preserve the original entry and record the amended entry, reason, date and the name/position of the person making the amendment.

4.2 Unplanned absence and illness

Parents must provide the reason for absence as soon as possible. Illness, including mental ill health, will normally be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the reason given. The school may request appropriate evidence where absence is prolonged, repeated, attendance is already a concern, or there are reasonable doubts about the authenticity of the illness. Evidence will not be requested unnecessarily.

Where a pupil is expected but does not attend and no reason has been received, the school will make first-day contact. If no emergency contact can be reached, or there are safeguarding concerns, the school may undertake a welfare check and/or contact children's social care or the police as appropriate.

4.3 Planned absence and appointments

Medical or dental appointments may be authorised when the school is notified in advance. Pupils should attend before and/or after the appointment wherever practicable and be absent only for the minimum time necessary. Other leave of absence requests must be made as far in advance as possible using the school's form.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil arriving after registration has begun but before the register closes will be recorded as late (code L). A pupil arriving after the register has closed, without another authorised reason, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session (code U). Repeated lateness will be monitored and addressed with parents through the same support-first approach used for absence.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

- Contact parents/carers on the first day and continue contact on subsequent unexplained days.
- Establish the reason for absence and enter the correct code as soon as possible and within the statutory timeframe.

- Consider safeguarding and children-missing-education risks immediately.
- Offer support and identify whether wider services or local authority attendance support are needed.
- Where support is not appropriate, is unsuccessful or is not engaged with, consider formal attendance action in line with the national framework and local authority processes.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Leave of absence in term time

The Executive Headteacher may grant leave of absence only where the circumstances permitted by the 2024 regulations apply. These include participation in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad, attending an interview, a temporary time-limited reintegration timetable, and exceptional circumstances. The length of any leave is determined by the school.

Family holidays during term time are not normally exceptional circumstances and will not usually be authorised. Each request will be considered individually, taking account of the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context. Evidence may be requested. Requests should normally be submitted at least two weeks in advance where the circumstances allow.

5.2 Other authorised reasons

- Illness, including physical or mental ill health.
- Medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observance on a day exclusively set apart by the relevant religious body.
- A parent travelling for occupational purposes where the statutory criteria are met.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion where no alternative provision has been made.

5.3 Penalty notices and legal intervention

The Federation will use legal intervention only when appropriate and after considering the individual circumstances, support already offered, engagement with that support, safeguarding considerations and duties under the Equality Act 2010. The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may arise from any combination of unauthorised absence and can span different terms or school years.

- First penalty notice to a parent for the same pupil: £80 if paid within 21 days, otherwise £160 within 28 days.
- Second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years: £160 within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice; alternative legal action may be considered.
- Where support is appropriate but not engaged with, a Notice to Improve may be used in line with the local authority code of conduct and national framework.

Penalty notices are issued and administered in accordance with the local authority code of conduct. Other statutory interventions may include attendance prosecution, an Education Supervision Order, a Parenting Order or a School Attendance Order, as applicable.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Create safe, welcoming and inclusive schools where pupils feel they belong and can succeed.
- Communicate clear expectations to families, using supportive, factual and timely messages.

- Celebrate strong and improving attendance carefully, without stigmatising pupils whose absence is linked to disability, illness or circumstances beyond their control.
- Use attendance data to identify emerging patterns early rather than waiting for a pupil to become persistently absent.
- Discuss attendance with parents through reports, meetings and targeted conversations.
- Work with the Attendance Support Worker/local authority and other agencies when additional help is needed.
- Ensure staff understand that absence may be a symptom of wider needs and know how to raise concerns.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Complex barriers to attendance

Where barriers are complex, the school will work with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant partners to understand what is preventing attendance. Support will be individual, proportionate and regularly reviewed. This may include pastoral support, changes to routines, trusted-adult support, attendance plans, reasonable adjustments, multi-agency work or a carefully planned reintegration.

7.2 Mental or physical ill health and SEND

The federation will not operate a "one size fits all" response. We will work with families to remove in-school barriers and make reasonable adjustments where required. Where a pupil has an EHC plan and attendance falls, or barriers relate to the pupil's special educational needs, the school will work with the local authority and request review of provision where appropriate. A temporary reintegration timetable will be used only in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest necessary period, with parental agreement, a clear plan and regular review.

Parents are encouraged to use NHS "Is my child too ill for school?" guidance when deciding whether illness requires absence. The school may also signpost families to appropriate health, mental health or early-help services.

7.3 Returning after lengthy or unavoidable absence

The school will plan a supportive return where needed, considering the pupil's voice, curriculum access, relationships, anxiety, medical/SEND needs and any safeguarding issues. A reintegration plan may identify a named adult, phased supports or reasonable adjustments, with review dates and clear steps towards full participation.

8. Attendance monitoring and escalation

8.1 Monitoring and analysis

- Monitor attendance and punctuality at least half-termly, termly and annually at federation, school, year-group, cohort and individual-pupil level.
- Benchmark attendance against national and local data where available.
- Review patterns for vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with a social worker, while avoiding assumptions about individual causes.
- Provide appropriate reports to class teachers, leaders, the DSL/SENCO, pupil premium lead and governors.
- Evaluate the impact of interventions and adapt them when they are not improving attendance.

8.2 Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence means missing 50% or more. The federation will prioritise pupils who are persistently or severely absent, as well as those whose emerging pattern places them at risk of reaching these thresholds.

- Review the pupil's attendance pattern and any safeguarding concerns.
- Meet parents/carers to listen to and understand barriers.
- Agree clear actions, support, responsibilities and review dates.
- Involve wider services or local authority attendance support where appropriate.
- Escalate to formal action where support is not appropriate, has not worked or has not been engaged with.

8.3 Federation attendance response

Stage	Typical federation response
Early concern / emerging pattern	Prompt contact; supportive conversation; identify barriers; class/office monitoring; agree immediate actions.
Attendance at risk of persistent absence	Formal review with family; attendance plan; reasonable adjustments/support; consider Attendance Support Worker or wider services; regular review.
Persistent absence (10%+ missed)	Senior leader oversight; multi-agency support where appropriate; written plan/contract; safeguarding review; consider Notice to Improve where statutory threshold and circumstances apply.
Severe absence (50%+ missed)	Priority safeguarding and multi-agency response; intensive attendance support; local authority involvement; frequent review; legal intervention considered where appropriate.
Unauthorised absence meets national threshold	Case-by-case review of support and circumstances; consider Notice to Improve, penalty notice referral/request or other legal intervention in line with local authority procedures.

9. Safeguarding and children missing education

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, unmet need or a child missing education. Staff will follow the federation Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education and local children-missing-education procedures. A pupil will not be removed from roll unless the statutory grounds and required enquiries/notifications have been completed.

10. Monitoring arrangements and linked policies

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher and sooner if legislation or DfE/local authority guidance changes. Each review will be presented to the Full Governing Board for approval.

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education procedures
- Admissions and off-rolling procedures

- Equality information and objectives

Appendix 1: National attendance codes

The federation will use the national attendance and absence codes required by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE school census guidance. The table below provides the principal codes used in primary schools; staff must use the current DfE definitions when recording attendance.

Code	Meaning
/	Present – morning session
****	Present – afternoon session
L	Late before register closes
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational visit or trip
P	Approved sporting activity
W	Work experience
B	Other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered – attending another school
C1	Leave for regulated performance/employment abroad
M	Medical/dental appointment
J1	Interview
X	Not required to attend (non-compulsory school age)
C2	Temporary reduced/part-time timetable
C	Leave in exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness
E	Suspended/permanently excluded with no alternative provision
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements
Y1	Transport normally provided not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of school premises closed
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed
Y5	Criminal justice detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause
G	Holiday not granted by school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other/unknown circumstances
U	Arrived after register closed

Appendix 2: Sources used for the 2026–2027 update

- Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance – statutory guidance, last updated 9 July 2026.
- Department for Education, school census guidance and national attendance codes for 2026–2027.
- Department for Education, Communicating with parents about school attendance, published 9 June 2026.
- The federation's St Anne's Attendance Policy 2026 and St Martin's Attendance Policy 2026, both based on The Key template.