



Learn  
Love  
Believe

## WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STATEMENT

### 1. Context

St Gabriel's is totally committed to ensuring that the attendance of its pupils is consistently higher than government guidelines. Our mission statement commits the school to providing an outstanding educational experience which delivers a "whole life" preparation for each and every pupil. We want our children to become highly motivated, spiritually and morally balanced human beings to serve God and society.

"We believe that each person should be known, loved and valued by encouragement to realise his/her full potential through positive commitment and achievement.

It is our aim that children "learn, love and believe" through their daily lives and experiences at St Gabriel's and enjoy their time at school, whilst developing their academic, spiritual and social experience within a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum, enhanced by our extensive enrichment programme. If pupils are happy, feel safe and well cared for, they will enjoy coming to school.

We provide an environment where all pupils feel valued, welcomed and part of the Catholic family. For a child to reach their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We work consistently hard towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity is taken to convey to children and their parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

A Deputy Headteacher is responsible for school attendance and punctuality of pupils.

Heads of Year monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils in their year group and are directly responsible to the Deputy Headteacher.

The Lead Attendance Officer is responsible for administration matters dealing with attendance and punctuality reporting to Heads of Year and the Deputy Headteacher.

The school employs a part-time School Attendance Officer (SAO) through a Service Level Agreement with the Local Authority.

## 2. Promoting Attendance

- i. Parents/carers are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly in order to receive their education.
- ii. We liaise closely with feeder primaries to identify potential attendance matters in respect of medical conditions, social and domestic etc., which may impact on poor attendance.
- iii. Parents/carers are addressed at the Welcome Evening about the attendance policy and procedures for absence.
- iv. Pupils are encouraged and rewarded for good attendance. In Year 7 there is a Five Star Club. Attendance is a key aspect of this.
- v. Pupils receive attendance certificates each year for 100% attendance along with prizes.
- vi. Attendance is a key aspect of leaver's references.
- vii. In assemblies, RAP days and IAG events, pupils are informed and encouraged about high attendance at school and the positive effects it has on future learning careers.
- viii. Pupils with full attendance receive recognition at Celebration Evening.

## 3. Holidays in Term Time

- i. Guidelines from the DFE are followed.
- ii. The school exercises its right to issue Fixed Penalty Notices where appropriate.
- iii. The school will only grant leave of absence for family holidays in "exceptional circumstances" as identified in DFE guidance.
- iv. School will inform the parent/carer of the outcome of any requests by letter/email.
- v. If the parent/carer chooses to continue with the planned holiday it will be considered as an unauthorised absence and will be referred to the SAO.

## 4. Issuing Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School

- i. The school will issue penalty notices where guidance from the DFE/LA warrant it (See Appendix)
- ii. Any penalty notice issued by the school must be in line with Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behavior Act 2003, the Education (penalty notices) Regulations 2007 and Section 444 Education Act 1996 and be part of the Code of Conduct under the control of Bury Council.
- iii. In law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure a child attends school regularly at the school which they are registered unless the absence has been authorised by the school.
- iv. The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days from the date of issue.
- v. Penalty notices will only be used where a parent is capable of securing an improvement in their child's school attendance but is unwilling to do so. They are not for use as a punishment for absence.
- vi. The School Attendance Team is responsible for initiating the penalty notice system on behalf of Bury Council.
- vii. The issuing of a penalty notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:
  - Overt truancy
  - Parentally – condoned absence
  - Unauthorised holidays in term time

- Persistent late arrival at school.
- viii. Bury Council will issue a penalty notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:
  - Absent for 20 sessions (ten school days) within pre-set submission dates (not necessarily consecutive).
  - Persistent late (code U) after the register has closed for 10 sessions.

## 5. **Absence from School**

- i. Any child who is absent from school at any point of the day must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school).
- ii. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on his behalf can authorise absence.
- iii. Where there is no known reason for the absence, then the absence has to be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### *First Day Absence*

- i. If a child is absent from school, it is the duty of parents/carers to inform the school immediately stating the reason for the absence. This is recorded by the office staff.
- ii. If no contact is made by a parent/carer explaining the absence on the first day, school will phone home to secure an explanation. Where the school is unable to make contact by phone an email under the "In Touch" system will be sent, or a text message.
- iii. If, after the pupil returns to school and no explanation of absence is given by the parent/carer, the school will immediately contact the parent/carer. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no explanation is obtained.
- iv. Regular checks are carried out by the school and the SAO (School Attendance Officer).
- v. If attendance falls below 90% a letter will be sent home on behalf of the Headteacher requesting an explanation and improvement, as well as offering support. The SAO will also do a home visit or invite parents/carers to a formal meeting at school, after liaising with Mrs Roberts or relevant Head of Year.

### *Persistent Absence (Defined in Legislation as 10% or more absences)*

- i. Persistent absences can include both authorised or unauthorised or a combination of both. A child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment.
- ii. Any pupils in this case will be referred to by the school to the SAO.
- iii. The school's link SAO visits the school on a regular basis to address any attendance issues. He/she has regular meetings with Mrs Roberts and the Heads of Year.
- iv. It is the responsibility of the Head of Year to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. Each Head of Year has a weekly meeting with the SAO where attendance is discussed.
- v. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parents.

- vi. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer the case to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one.
- vii. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school link SAO.
- viii. If the issue appears to be with a teacher, a curriculum matter or indeed friendship problems, it is hoped that the school will be able to resolve the matter internally through the pastoral and safeguarding procedures.
- ix. After a prolonged absence for whatever reason, school will ensure that the pupil is made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missing work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## 6. Punctuality

- i. St Gabriel's encourages all pupils to be punctual to school, punctual to form time and lessons and punctual to enrichment activities.
- ii. Punctuality is seen as an intricate aspect of the attendance policy and persistent latecomers to school are subjected to the same code of conduct and attendance policy which could result in Penalty Notices as above.
- iii. St Gabriel's also takes into account issues with transport and traffic in Bury.
- iv. School buses can be late and any pupil who is late because of the school buses will not be subjected to the internal disciplinary policy on lateness.
- v. However, pupils who are late through their own fault will be dealt with in line with our Sanctions Policy.
- vi. Two colleagues will monitor the punctuality of pupils on arrival at school.
- vii. Pupils who are late on 2 or more occasions in in 5 consecutive days will make up the time after school.

## 7. Attendance Targets

- i. School sets attendance targets each year by the Headteacher and forms part of the School's Improvement Plan and SEF. Mrs Roberts is responsible along with Heads of Year in overseeing systems to ensure that the target is met.

Our school attendance target is:

2014-15	96%
2015-16	96%
2016-17	96.3%
2017-18	96.7%
2018-19	97. %