



St Gabriel's R.C. High School

Whole School Attendance Policy

Approved by governors: November 2020

Reviewed November 2020

Next review September 2021

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, and 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.

The Deputy Headteacher (pastoral) 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 School Attendance Officer (Mrs Vaughan) is responsible for supporting pastoral staff in conjunction with attendance and punctuality reporting to Heads of Year, Assistant Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher.

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

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 factors etc., which may impact on poor attendance.
- iii. Attendance and punctuality are presented on every school report through a pupil's academic journey.
- iv. Parents and carers are addressed at the Welcome Evening about the attendance policy and procedures for absence.
- v. Pupils are encouraged and rewarded for good attendance. In Year 7 there is a Five Star Club. Attendance is a key aspect of this.
- vi. Pupils receive attendance certificates and prizes each year for 100% attendance.
- vii. Attendance is a key aspect of leavers' references.
- viii. In assemblies, RAP days and CEIAG events, pupils are informed and encouraged about high attendance at school and the positive effects it has on future learning and careers.
- ix. Pupils with full attendance receive recognition at Celebration Evening.

3. Holidays in Term Time

- i. Guidelines from the Department for Education are followed.
- ii. As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.
View guidance on how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>).
- iii. The school exercises its right to issue Fixed Penalty Notices where appropriate.
- iv. The school will only grant leave of absence for family holidays in "exceptional circumstances" as identified in Department for Education guidance.
- v. The school will inform the parent/carer of the outcome of any requests by letter/email.
- vi. If the parent/carer chooses to continue with the planned holiday it will be considered as an unauthorised absence and may incur a fine via the Penalty Notice procedure enforced by Bury Council

4. Issuing Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School

- i. The school will issue penalty notices where guidance from the DFE/Bury Council warrants it. (Also see Appendix A)
- ii. Any penalty notice issued by the school must be in accordance with Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behavior Act 2003, the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and the Code of Conduct under the control of Bury Council. (Also see Appendix B)

- 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 penalty 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. If payment is not received in 28 days prosecution may follow.
- 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 10 sessions (five 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 an approved educational activity (attendance out of school).
- ii. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on her 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, including absences relating to covid-19. This is recorded by the office staff.
- ii. In all cases of self-isolation, school should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.
- iii. 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.
- iv. If no contact is made on the first or second day, then the School Attendance Officer will make a home visit to establish the reason for absence.

- v. If after the pupil returns to school 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.
- vi. Regular checks are carried out by the school and the School Attendance Officer.
- vii. If attendance falls below 95% a letter will be sent home on behalf of the Headteacher requesting an explanation and improvement, as well as offering support. The School Attendance Officer will also do a home visit or invite parents/carers to a formal meeting at school, after liaising with the deputy head (pastoral) or the relevant Head of Year.
- viii. If a pupil is absent for 3-4 days then the Headteacher will accept an NHS Self-Certificate Form for a self-limiting illness. In the case of an absence for 5 days or more, the school will require evidence from a medical professional, which can include proof of a GP appointment or sight of prescription boxes/bottles where appropriate.

Persistent Absence (Defined in legislation as 10% or more absences)

- i. Persistent absences can include authorised, 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 monitored by the school and the School Attendance Officer.
- iii. The School Attendance Officer will ask parents/carers to meet the Deputy Headteacher, an Assistant Headteacher, a Head of Year or an Assistant Head of Year.
- iv. It is the responsibility of the Head of Year to be aware of any emerging attendance concerns and take appropriate action. Each Head of Year has a weekly meeting with the School Attendance Officer 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/carers.
- vi. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer the case to the School Nurse or help parents/carers/the pupil to contact a relevant outside agency
- vii. In some cases the school may seek advice from Bury Council's Education Welfare Service.
- 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, the 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 is brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

A summary of actions taken for the consideration of absence is presented in Appendix A.

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 inherent 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 Positive Discipline Policy.
- vi. Two members of staff will monitor the punctuality of pupils on arrival at school.
- vii. Pupils will be marked late from 8.46am and will make up the time after school the following day with a 55 minute detention* .
*discretionary due to covid-19 and public transmission restrictions

7. **Attendance Targets**

- i. The Headteacher sets attendance targets each year which form part of the School's Improvement Plan and SEF. The deputy head (pastoral) is responsible along with Heads of Year for overseeing systems to ensure that the target is met.

Our school attendance target for 2020-21 is: 95%. This is in line with Government standards

Appendix A

1 Monitor school attendance daily/weekly

- a. Ensure school has a reason for absence / follow up all 'N' codes
- b. Check with FT, HOY & SLT for any known absences (FTE, authorised absences)
- c. Identify poor attendance, report to HOY
- d. If no response from parents or any other contacts – SAO to check with HOY or DHT to do home visit
- e. Record all events

2 Attendance falls below 97%

- a. Check problems in school / speak with FT or HOY
- b. Invite young person to an informal chat with HOY or SAO on return from absence
- c. Check punctuality – arriving after registers have closed
- d. Check – holiday
- e. Check medical history
- f. Check family background – anything school should be made aware of
- g. Monitor weekly with HOY for improvement in timetables meeting
- h. Record all events

3 Attendance falls below 94%

- a. Discuss with HOY
- b. Contact parents – ask all above
- c. Send out 94% letter and reg cert from HOY
- d. Monitor for improvement – no improvement see 4.
- e. Record all events

4 Attendance falls below 90%

- a. Send letter to parents – invite to meeting with SAO Mrs Vaughan
- b. Meeting with HOY & SAO – reg cert / discuss barriers to learning / options to improve
- c. Monitor – If improves inform parents praise – if no improvement consider referral to School Nurse, MASH, 'Story So Far' etc.
- d. Record all events

5 Attendance continues to fall

- a. Invite parents and young person to a meeting with HOY, DHT, ADHT and for further support.
- b. Monitor – no improvement – consider either Penalty Warning letter or referral to the Education Welfare Team
- c. Record all events

6 After all above exhausted – consider fine / court proceedings following Bury Council advice.

Appendix B

CODE OF CONDUCT

Issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised

Absence from schools

September 2017

Bury Council

www.bury.gov.uk