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ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy replaces the previous detailed attendance policy and provides a concise, school-specific framework for promoting, monitoring and improving attendance.

This policy is underpinned by our school motto and our core values, so that pupils become wise, courageous learners, as well as dignified people of integrity.

"Just and firm of purpose"

The motto of Archbishop Edward Ilsley, and the motto of our school

Our Core Values

Wisdom • Courage • Dignity • Integrity

From September 2026

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1. Purpose and aims

Regular attendance is essential to pupils' learning, progress, wellbeing, relationships and future opportunities. Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School is committed to creating a culture in which pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and want to be in school, while ensuring that barriers to attendance are identified and addressed early.

Our approach is child-centred, supportive and consistent. We work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate. We expect high attendance, but we recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider circumstances and that different pupils may require different support.

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote excellent attendance and punctuality as the norm;
- ensure every pupil has access to their full-time education;
- identify attendance concerns early and respond before absence becomes entrenched;
- build strong relationships with pupils and families and understand the barriers affecting attendance;
- provide appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where required;
- use attendance data intelligently to target support and evaluate its impact;
- celebrate good and improved attendance;
- ensure consistent, lawful and transparent attendance procedures across the school; and
- use formal and legal intervention where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with, or inappropriate to the circumstances.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and other relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

- Education Act 1996, including section 7 and section 444
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools
- Equality Act 2010
- Birmingham City Council attendance guidance and local procedures

The policy will be updated when statutory requirements or local authority procedures change.

3. Our attendance expectations

The school's attendance target is 97%. Every pupil is expected to attend school every day that the school is open, arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons.

Expectation	Archbishop Ilsley expectation
Arrival	Pupils should be in school by 8:30am and ready for the 8:45am start.
School day	The published school day runs from 8:45am to 3:15pm. 2:35 Fridays
Lessons	Pupils are expected to attend every timetabled lesson and be on time.
Absence	Parents/carers must notify school promptly and provide the reason for absence.
Appointments	Where possible, appointments should be arranged outside school hours; pupils should attend school before/after appointments where practicable.
Term-time leave	Leave of absence will only be granted where the legal requirements for exceptional circumstances are met.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Governors / Local Governing Body

- set high expectations for attendance and punctuality;
- provide challenge and support to school leaders;
- monitor attendance information and the impact of attendance strategies; and
- ensure the school meets its statutory duties.

Headteacher

- has overall responsibility for implementation of this policy;
- ensures accurate attendance registration and effective first-day response systems;
- authorises or refuses requests for leave of absence in line with statutory guidance;
- ensures attendance is treated as a whole-school priority; and
- oversees legal intervention where appropriate.

Senior Leader responsible for Attendance

- leads the whole-school attendance strategy;
- sets and communicates high expectations;
- analyses attendance data and identifies pupils, groups and cohorts requiring support;
- oversees the 5 Foundations approach and staged intervention;
- coordinates attendance review meetings and support plans;
- liaises with Birmingham City Council and external partners; and
- ensures attendance is promoted, celebrated and consistently addressed.

Attendance Team

- monitor attendance daily and follow up unexplained absence;
- maintain accurate attendance records and process absence information;
- contact parents/carers and provide regular attendance information;
- identify emerging patterns and refer concerns to pastoral staff;
- support attendance reviews, home visits and attendance plans;
- coordinate evidence required for local authority legal intervention; and
- promote attendance rewards and positive communication.

Heads of Year / Assistant Head Of Year

- monitor attendance within their year group;
- discuss attendance with pupils and identify barriers;
- support form tutors with attendance conversations and interventions;
- coordinate pastoral and wider support where required; and
- escalate concerns to the Attendance Team.

Form Tutors and teaching staff

- reinforce the importance of attendance and punctuality every day;
- know the attendance position of pupils in their care;
- have regular conversations with pupils where attendance is a concern;
- recognise changes in presentation, engagement or attendance that may indicate an underlying barrier;
- raise concerns promptly with the relevant pastoral/attendance staff; and
- accurately complete registers at the required times.

Parents/carers

- ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time;
- notify school promptly when their child is absent and provide the reason;
- avoid routine appointments during the school day wherever possible;
- avoid term-time holidays unless an exceptional circumstance applies;
- work with school when attendance becomes a concern; and
- inform school about circumstances that may create a barrier to attendance.

Pupils

- attend school and lessons regularly and punctually;
- take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality;
- speak to a trusted adult if something is affecting their ability to attend; and
- engage positively with support intended to improve attendance.

5. Recording and reporting attendance

Archbishop Ilsley maintains an electronic admission and attendance register using the Department for Education's national attendance codes. In a secondary school, attendance is checked at the start of the school day and at the beginning of lessons for safeguarding and monitoring purposes.

Parents/carers should report an absence each day using the school's agreed reporting route. The school will contact parents/carers where a pupil is absent without an established reason and may carry out a safe-and-well/home visit where appropriate.

An explanation for an absence does not automatically mean that the absence is authorised. The school determines the appropriate attendance code in line with statutory guidance.

6. Absence, illness, appointments and lateness

Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must contact the school before the start of the school day and continue to provide updates while the absence continues. Where no reason is provided, the school will make contact and consider safeguarding action where necessary.

Illness

The school will follow national guidance when deciding whether illness should be recorded as authorised. Medical evidence will not be requested unnecessarily, but may be requested where there is a genuine concern about the reason or pattern of absence.

Medical and dental appointments

Appointments should normally be arranged outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents/carers should notify the school in advance and provide evidence where requested. Pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment wherever possible.

Lateness

Punctuality matters. Pupils arriving after the published start time will be recorded as late. Arriving after the register has closed may result in an absence mark in accordance with the national attendance codes. Persistent lateness will be monitored and addressed through the same support-first approach.

Term-time leave

Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take a child out of school during term time. The Headteacher may only grant leave where the legal requirements for exceptional circumstances are met. Requests must be made in advance. Holidays, cheaper travel, family visits, birthdays and similar social activities will not normally meet the exceptional circumstances test.

7. The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice

Archbishop Ilsley follows the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice. The approach is child-centred and places belonging, connectedness, early identification and strong relationships at the heart of attendance improvement.

1. Expect – Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Communicate clearly that every child should attend every day and be ready to learn.

2. Monitor – Use accurate, timely attendance data to identify emerging patterns, pupils at risk and groups requiring additional attention.

3. Listen and Understand – Talk to pupils and families about what is affecting attendance. Seek the root causes and understand the pupil's experience.

4. Facilitate Support – Remove barriers through school-based support, reasonable adjustments and, where appropriate, referrals to Early Help, health, local authority or other partners.

5. Formalise Support and Enforce – Where voluntary support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or inappropriate, formal attendance support and statutory/legal intervention will be considered.

The 5 Foundations are applied throughout the attendance journey. Escalation is based on the individual circumstances of the pupil and family; support is not delayed until attendance reaches a particular percentage.

8. Attendance review and communication timeline

Parents/carers will receive regular information about their child's attendance. The purpose of the review letters is to keep families informed, encourage early action and make clear what support or next steps may be required. A letter does not necessarily mean that further intervention will occur; the response depends on the individual attendance picture.

The 2026–27 review schedule for whole-school attendance communication followed by 10 scheduled reviews.

Communication	Date	Purpose
Whole-school attendance letter	Friday 4 September 2026	Attendance expectations and the importance of regular attendance
Review 1	Friday 2 October 2026	Current attendance position / early concerns
Review 2	Friday 23 October 2026	Attendance update and support where required
Review 3	Friday 27 November 2026	Attendance update / graduated response
Review 4	Friday 18 December 2026	Attendance update before Christmas
Review 5	Friday 29 January 2027	Attendance update / intervention where required
Review 6	Friday 5 March 2027	Attendance update / support and challenge
Review 7	Friday 26 March 2027	Attendance update before Easter
Review 8	Friday 7 May 2027	Attendance update / graduated response
Review 9	Friday 11 June 2027	Attendance update / support or formal action where required
Review 10	Friday 9 July 2027	Final annual attendance review

The school may communicate more frequently than this schedule where attendance is a concern, where a pupil is absent without explanation, or where a support plan or formal process is in place.

9. Supporting pupils and removing barriers

Poor attendance may be linked to a wide range of factors. The school will seek to understand the reason for absence before deciding what action is appropriate.

- bullying or peer relationships;
- mental health, anxiety or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA);
- special educational needs and/or disabilities;
- medical or long-term health needs;
- family circumstances or housing instability;
- transport or travel difficulties;
- financial or practical barriers;
- behaviour, curriculum or school-based barriers; and
- other safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Support may include pupil check-ins, form tutor support, Head of Year involvement, attendance plans, mentoring, reasonable adjustments, reintegration plans, Early Help, Family Support, health or specialist referrals, alternative provision or multi-agency planning. Support will be proportionate to need and reviewed for impact.

For pupils with SEND, disabilities or health needs, the school will consider reasonable adjustments and work with families and relevant professionals. A pupil's attendance ambition remains high, while the school recognises and responds appropriately to individual barriers.

Home Visits / Safe and Well Checks

A home visit may take place even where the school is aware of the reason for a pupil's absence and the absence has been authorised.

Authorised absence does not remove the school's responsibility to maintain appropriate oversight of a pupil's welfare. Where a pupil has been absent for a prolonged period, including due to illness or a long-term medical condition, the school may undertake a safe and well check.

The purpose of a safe and well check is not to challenge or question a genuine medical absence. It is to ensure that:

- the pupil is safe and well;
- the school maintains appropriate contact with the family;
- the pupil's needs have not changed;
- appropriate support is being provided;
- the family knows how the school can support a return to education when appropriate; and
- any emerging safeguarding or welfare concerns are identified and acted upon.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because of a medical condition, the school will work with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals to consider appropriate support and arrangements for education.

Our approach

Home visits will be undertaken in a calm, respectful and supportive manner. The purpose is to work with families, not against them, to understand barriers and help pupils access education safely and successfully.

Where a home visit identifies a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate. Where concerns indicate that a child may be at risk of harm, action should be taken without delay.

A home visit is therefore not necessarily an indication that a family is in trouble. It is one of the ways the school maintains contact with families, supports attendance and ensures that pupils remain safe, well and connected to education

10.Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is attendance of 90% or below. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of possible sessions. Pupils approaching or meeting these thresholds will receive increased monitoring and, where required, targeted support.

The school will not wait for a pupil to become persistently absent before acting. Emerging patterns, repeated absence, frequent lateness and changes in attendance will be considered alongside the individual circumstances of the pupil.

11.Home Visits

At Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School, we recognise that regular attendance is essential to pupils' education, wellbeing and safeguarding. Where a pupil has been absent from school for three consecutive days, a member of the Attendance Team will undertake a home visit, including where an absence has been authorised due to illness. The purpose of these visits is to carry out a safe and well check, maintain positive communication with families, identify any barriers to attendance and establish whether additional support is required.

Home visits form part of our proactive, safeguarding-led approach and are not intended as a punitive measure. Where safeguarding concerns arise, or the school is unable to establish contact with parents or carers, a home visit may take place sooner.

If the Attendance Team is unable to see the pupil and confirm that they are safe and well, further safeguarding action will be taken. This may include a referral to Birmingham City Council's Children Missing Education (CME) service, where the referral criteria are met, and contacting the police to request a welfare check where concerns about the pupil's safety remain. Any escalation will be informed by the individual circumstances, the level of risk and the school's safeguarding procedures.

Our priority is to ensure that every pupil is safe, accounted for and supported to access education. We expect parents and carers to work collaboratively with the school to enable appropriate welfare checks and maintain regular communication during periods of absence.

12.Legal intervention

Archbishop Ilsley follows a support-first approach. Legal intervention is considered on an individual case-by-case basis where support has not been successful, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate.

Possible interventions include:

- attendance contracts;
- Education Supervision Orders;
- Notice to Improve where appropriate;
- penalty notices in line with the National Framework; and
- attendance prosecution.

A penalty notice must be considered when the national threshold is met: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The decision will take account of the individual circumstances, previous support, safeguarding considerations and whether a penalty notice is the most appropriate intervention.

Under the national framework, a first penalty notice is £80 if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid within 28 days. A second penalty notice for the same parent and child within a three-year period is charged at £160.

13.Attendance rewards and recognition

Attendance is promoted positively and celebrated sensitively. Rewards will recognise both consistently high attendance and significant improvement. The school may use assemblies, certificates, postcards, displays, tutor-group competitions and attendance incentive campaigns.

Rewards will be applied sensitively and will not disadvantage pupils whose attendance is affected by complex circumstances.

14.Monitoring, safeguarding and data

Attendance is monitored daily and analysed at pupil, year-group, cohort and whole-school level. The school will use data to identify trends, evaluate interventions and allocate resources.

- Attendance information will be shared with staff who need it to support pupils.
- Relevant attendance information may be shared with the local authority, DfE and partner agencies where there is a lawful basis and/or statutory duty.
- Unexplained or concerning absence will be treated as a potential safeguarding matter.
- Children missing education procedures will be followed where required.
- The school will keep appropriate records of attendance interventions, parental contact and support offered.

Children Missing Education (CME)

- The school has a duty to identify and act when a pupil is missing from education and their whereabouts are unknown. In line with Birmingham City Council's Children Missing Education (CME) procedures, the school will make prompt and reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and identify whether they are receiving suitable education elsewhere.
- Where the school is unable to locate a pupil or establish their educational circumstances, a CME referral will be made to Birmingham City Council, normally within five school days of the first day of absence where the pupil's whereabouts are unknown. The school will continue to work with the CME Team and will not remove the pupil from the school roll unless the appropriate legal process has been followed.
- CME referrals may be appropriate where, for example:
  - a pupil is absent and their whereabouts are unknown;
  - the family has moved without providing a new address or school;
  - repeated attempts to contact the family have been unsuccessful;
  - the school has reason to believe the pupil may no longer be receiving suitable education.
- The school will work closely with Birmingham City Council, the family and relevant partner agencies to safeguard the pupil and secure their continued access to education

15.Policy review and linked policies

This policy will be reviewed in line with statutory guidance and the school/MAC review cycle. It will be updated where legislation, DfE guidance or Birmingham City Council procedures change.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy / SEND Information Report
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Home–School Agreement / Parent Information

Appendix 1 – Key attendance information for parents

Question	Archbishop Ilsley answer
What is the school attendance target?	97%
What time should pupils be in school?	By 8:30am for an 8:45am start.
When does the school day finish?	3:15pm. 2:35pm Fridays
How do I report absence?	Contact the school each day using the school's agreed absence reporting route.
Can I take my child on holiday during term time?	Only where the Headteacher agrees that the legal test for exceptional circumstances is met.
What happens if attendance becomes a concern?	The school will communicate with you, seek to understand barriers and provide support. Further formal or legal action may follow where appropriate.
Who can I contact for attendance support?	The Attendance Team / Attendance and Pastoral Team via 0121 706 4200.