



**Good Shepherd Catholic
Primary & Nursery School**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Last Review Date: January 2022

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013,2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recoding attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls and check emails from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils should arrive in school at 8:40 am each day as all children have Early Morning Work at that time.

The register for the first session will be taken after Early Morning Work at 9:00 am and will be kept open until 9:15 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15 pm and will be kept open until 1:30 pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:40 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents can telephone the school on 01689 841771 and choose option 1 or alternatively email on attendance@goodshepherd.croydon.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we strongly encourage parent/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives:

- After 9:00 am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After 9.15 am will be marked as unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code.

At Good Shepherd, ongoing punctuality issues are discussed with the Educational Welfare Officer.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child that we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, if the 1st contact does not respond then we will continue to contact all emergency contacts listed to gain an absence reason. If a reason is still not obtained then we will text & email the first contact on the list
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, this may include a home visit from the Attendance Officer and a member of SLT
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code is used

4.6 Reporting to parents

Good Shepherd reports to parents on their child's attendance record annually in the written end-of-year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a funeral, wedding or serious illness of an immediate family member.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more details)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision elsewhere.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Good Shepherd targets unauthorised absence by meeting with parents, letters and closer monitoring alongside the Educational Welfare Officer.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The strategies for rewarding and improving attendance used at Good Shepherd include:

- Regularly communicating expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through our regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- Establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality such as end of year certificates
- Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- Contact parents/carers regarding absence and punctuality

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and termly basis

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school the first morning (preferably before 8:30 am) if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2) and to call (01689 841771) or email (attendance@goodshepherd.croydon.sch.uk) giving child's full name, year group and reason for absence i.e. John Smith Year 4 cannot come to school today as he has been vomiting all night. Parent/carers are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the child's absence.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Educational Welfare Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

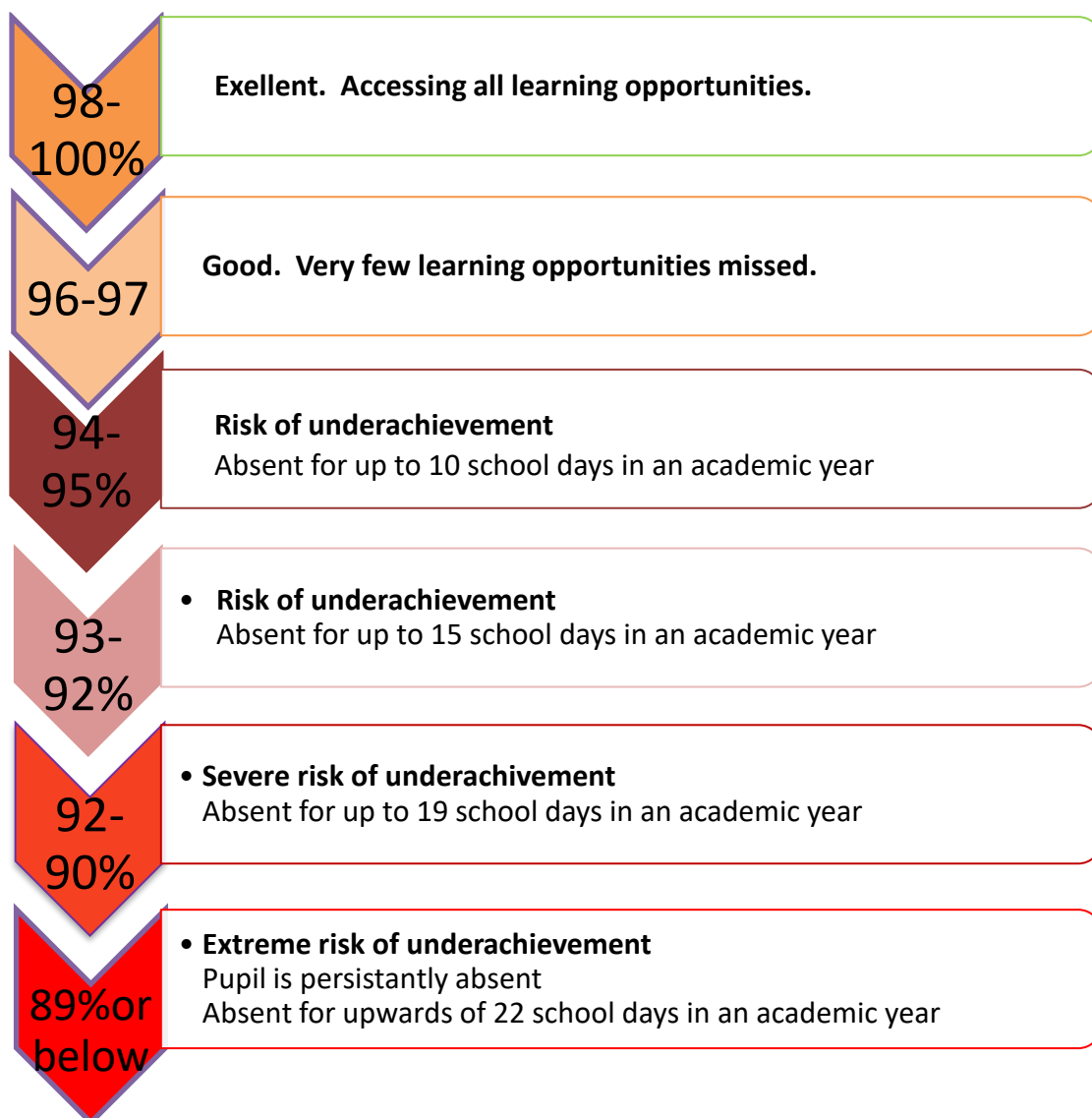
Good Shepherd collects and stores attendance data and uses it for internal purposes, for example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

7.1 Expected levels of attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the life chances of pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

At Good Shepherd Catholic & Nursery School we expect all children to achieve attendance that is at least 97%.



8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the headteacher.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved education activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved education activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved education activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence

N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved education activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity
W	Work experience	Approved education activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances