Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT)

Attendance policy

Teach us how short our life is, so that we may become wise.

Psalm 90:12

Approved by:	The Trust Board	**Date:**	September 2026
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Why is attending school so important?

- Greater academic achievement
- Improved career prospects
- Improved mental health
- Greater social skills
- Greater ability to communicate with different people
- Improved life chances

The table below indicates the numbers of days and lessons missed as attendance decreases.

Attendance percentage	Days missed	Lessons missed
100%	0	0
99%	2	10
97%	5	25
95%	10	50
93%	14	70
90%	20	100

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

Working with the Local Authority and other agencies where additional support or legal intervention is required.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school and individual lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), updated 9 July 2026, 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board & Local Governing Body

The Trust Board approves and has oversight of the policy and delegates responsibility for the following to the LGBs:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ruth Dunbar and can be contacted via the school telephone number, 01162 857261 or by e-mail school.office@ctk.leicester.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer/Senior leader responsible for attendance

The school attendance officer/Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with the Leicester City Council Attendance Team to tackle persistent and severe absence and to pursue legal intervention where appropriate. Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Ruth Dunbar and can be contacted via the school telephone number, 01162 857261 or by e-mail school.office@ctk.leicester.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on Arbor for every lesson on a daily basis, using the correct codes. All registers should be done within 10 minutes of the lesson starting.

3.6 School reception staff

School reception staff will:

- Support the attendance officer by taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- In usual circumstances call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Work with the school and engage with support where attendance becomes a concern.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend all lessons and scheduled activities.
- Speak to a trusted adult if something is making it difficult to attend school regularly.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Christ the King will maintain an electronic attendance register using Arbor, the school's management information system. The statutory attendance register will be taken at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session, using the current national attendance codes.

Morning registration takes place between 8.25am to 8.35am Junior Site and between 8.45am to 8:50am Infant Site. Pupils arriving after this time but before 9.05am Junior Site and 9.20am Infant Site will be marked as late (L code) and the number of minutes of lost learning time will be logged on Arbor. Students arriving after 9.05am Junior Site and 9.20am Infant Site will be given a U code – arrived at school after the register closed. This is classed as an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration takes place from 1pm to 1.05pm.

Registers will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- We follow all current DFE guidance in relation to attendance coding.

  (See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.)

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.25am Junior Site and 8.45am Infant Site on each school day. The site is open from 8.15am Junior Site and 8.35am Infant Site and pupils can enter the building from 8.25am Junior Site and 8.45am Infant Site. The school gate closes at 8.35am Junior Site and 8.55am Infant Site. Latecomers will need to register at reception where lost learning time will be logged on Arbor.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on each day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school attendance line. (see also section 7).

To inform the school of unplanned absence parents/carers should phone the school number 0116 285 7261 and select the absence line/record a message/speak to a receptionist. The office will be open from 8.00am Junior Site and 8.30am Infant Site, however our absence line will be available before that time should you wish to leave a message.

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

Where the absence is longer than 3 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for 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 parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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.

Parents/Carers should let the school attendance officer know in advance of any absence due to medical or dental appointments and may be asked for evidence of said appointments.

However, we encourage parents/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 late:

- Before the register has closed 9.05am Juniors, 9.20am Infants, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).
- After the register has closed 9.05am Juniors, 9.20am Infants, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).

Punctuality is monitored on a daily basis. Parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting with the school if lateness persists and becomes a concern.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct home visits and where appropriate, contact the police or social care.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than **5 working days** after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer or contacting the local authority attendance team.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Parents will be able to access their child's attendance using their Arbor account. In addition, an Attendance, Lates and Behaviour snapshot is sent to parents/carers at the end of every half term with a school average comparison.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' which a headteacher may consider could include:

- Close family bereavement
- Attending a funeral of a close family member

(Special consideration will be made at the headteacher's discretion for families travelling overseas whereby three days of absence may be authorised to include two days of travel and one day for the ceremony)

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. 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

- Reasonable time limited adjustment agreed with SENDCo, Headteacher and parents

5.2 Legal sanctions and the National Framework for Penalty Notices

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

With the introduction of the new **National Framework for Penalty Notices**, the following changes came into force for Penalty Notice fines issued for unauthorised absence occurring after 19 August 2024

- **5 consecutive days of term time leave (holiday) –** Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days and for fewer days where this has happened before.
- **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period – Other than in exceptional circumstances,** Schools may make a referral to the Local Authority that could lead to a 'Notice to Improve'. (see 5.3)
- **Per parent, per child -** Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent for each child who was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent receiving 3 **separate** fines.
- **First offence –** The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular, unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days
- **Second offence (within 3 years) –** The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular, unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days. (there is no option to reduce to £80 with an early payment)
- **Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years) –** The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular, unauthorised absence a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate and may impact on job applications and travel abroad.
- **Court prosecutions –** Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued. Parents are advised that where the LA considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken.

5.4 Notice to Improve

- Where support is appropriate and the national threshold has been met, the school may work with the Leicester City Council Attendance Team to use a Notice to Improve as a final opportunity for parents/carers to engage with support and improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is considered.
- A Notice to Improve will not normally be appropriate where support is not appropriate to the circumstances, for example in cases involving an unauthorised term-time holiday. The school and Local Authority will follow the current Leicestershire Code of Conduct and DfE guidance when deciding the most appropriate intervention.
- Where a second Penalty Notice has already been issued for the same parent and child within a rolling three-year period, a third Penalty Notice will not normally be issued. Further legal action may be considered in accordance with the national framework and Leicestershire's procedures.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

As part of our commitment in promoting outstanding attendance Christ the King will;

- Ensure that our school is a warm, welcoming and friendly place of learning where all young people can thrive.
- Make parents/carers aware of the importance of their children attending school through regular communication and correspondence.
- Send half termly letters informing parents/carers of their child's attendance and lates percentage compared to the school average.
- Where appropriate, call/meet with parents/carers to discuss how the school can support them to improve attendance and to create an Attendance Support Plan
- Identify barriers to attendance and to work with families to overcome them.
- Work with the local authority and other agencies to support families with children that have low attendance.
- Work with the STACMAT Attendance Lead to identify additional support for parents and carers.
- Celebrate excellent attendance through the use of displays around the school.
- Celebrate excellent attendance in weekly Celebration
- Use Apps such as Arbor to inform parents/carers of their child's attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

As part of our commitment to monitoring attendance Christ the King will;

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level and follow the school's absence procedures.
- Analyse data from a working document to track the attendance, interventions and impact regarding pupils who are persistently absent. (Below 90%)
- Analyse data from Arbor to work with families of children who have reached the threshold of ten unauthorised sessions (including U codes) in a ten-week period.
- Analyse the attendance of key demographics such as year group, gender, SEND, EAL and Pupil Premium pupils.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Work with the STACMAT Attendance Lead to monitor severe absentees (below 50%) and analyse interventions, impact and next steps.

- Use data from sources such as Arbor, DFE statistics and FFT to compare school figures with national data.

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.

7.1 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to senior leaders, pastoral leaders and form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

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	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending provision arranged by Local Authority	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

C1	Authroised leave of absence for performance/regulated employment abroad	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Authorised leave of absence – Part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Suspended/Permanently Excluded	Pupil has been suspended/permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Interview	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	Transport issues	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Travel disruption	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	School premises partly closed	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unavoidably closed
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Public Health or Law guidance	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unavoidable causes	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school.
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Key attendance thresholds and legal intervention

Measure	Threshold	School response
Persistent absence	10% or more absence, with at least 20 possible sessions	Early identification, support and targeted intervention.
Severe absence	50% or more absence, with at least 20 possible sessions	Intensive support, multi-agency working and consideration of Local Authority involvement.
Penalty Notice threshold	10 sessions of G/N/O/U absence within 10 school weeks	Case-by-case decision; support first where appropriate, with Notice to Improve or Penalty Notice where appropriate.