Pope Francis
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Trust Attendance Policy

Uplifting Hearts, Inspiring Minds

Unity Excellence Service Love

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Record of changes		
Date:	Name:	Changes:
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This policy should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2026 statutory guidance)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Inclusion policies

1. Introduction & Rationale

At Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust (PFCMAT), our shared faith and mission is to help every child flourish and to ensure that our schools and communities grow and thrive as a result. We believe that each child is created in the image and likeness of God and has a unique dignity and purpose. Therefore, regular school attendance is paramount ensuring pupils have the best chance to learn well, develop confidence, and prepare for their future. Excellent attendance is a prerequisite to academic success; we expect high standards of attendance so that we can support your child to achieve. As a Catholic Trust, our aim is for our schools to be communities where children build friendships, form good habits, and discover their gifts. Children grow spiritually, morally, socially, and emotionally, supported by dedicated staff and surrounded by others who care for them, *building a culture where all pupils want to attend.*

Every child's presence at school enriches the whole, while absence can affect not only the individual but also their classmates and teachers. We will therefore *monitor* patterns of attendance across groups of children across our schools. As Pope Francis reminds us: **"***We must put fraternity at the centre of our lives. Fraternity means being attentive to others, recognising and respecting them as companions on the journey. It is the foundation of peace and the common good." — Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2014*

We know that sometimes life brings challenges that can make attendance difficult. We promise to li*sten, to support, and to work with families* to overcome barriers. Where more support is required, we will *facilitate* help and where necessary we will *formalise* this support. As educators we have chosen a mission to love and care for the children entrusted giving them every opportunity to flourish. It is only as a last resort that attendance will be *enforced* through statutory intervention, where we know doing so will encourage and improve attendance (except for unauthorised leave during term time).

2. Aims

To provide clear guidelines about how schools within Pope Francis CMAT will promote and attain high levels of pupil attendance and punctuality.

To ensure all stakeholders understand expectations of themselves and each other and strive to attain them.

To support the wider vision of Pope Francis CMAT and each school of ensuring all pupils can flourish in the modern world.

3. Who is responsible for this policy?

Pope Francis CMAT has overall responsibility for this policy end ensuring compliance with relevant statutory regulations. The day-to-day operations of this policy have been delegated to the local governing board and the Headteacher of each school.

The local governing body and school leadership team have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy so that all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

4. Definitions

"Session" - a term related to the recording of absence data - a school day has two sessions, AM and PM for which an attendance mark must be recorded by using a regulated attendance code provided by the Department of Education.

"Authorised Absence" - means that the school has given approval in advance or accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent from school.

"Unauthorised Absence" - Where no advance application has been sought for an absence or acceptable reason for absence provided the school will not approve the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age.

"Attendance Champion" - The senior leader responsible for attendance in a school.

"Attendance Contract" - A formal agreement to address irregular attendance

"Education Supervision Order" - A formal legally binding intervention

"Attendance Prosecution" - If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at school or alternative provision their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority

"Penalty Notices" - Issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or in certain cases at a place where alternative provision is provided.
"Extenuating circumstances" - Rare significant, unavoidable

5. Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- Section 7 of the *Education Act 1996* (duty on parents to ensure regular attendance)
- Section 444 of the *Education Act 1996* (offences for non-attendance)
- *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & 2013*
- *Children Missing Education* statutory guidance
- *Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)*
- *Education Act 1996 (sections 7, 8, 14 and 19)*
- *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*
- *Section 175(4) of the Education Act 2002 (all chapters)*

In exceptional circumstances, the headteacher with the consent of a parent/carer may consider a temporary reduced timetable. Trust processes for this application must be followed and approval granted by Pope Francis CMAT.

A parent or carer who fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly without good reason may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

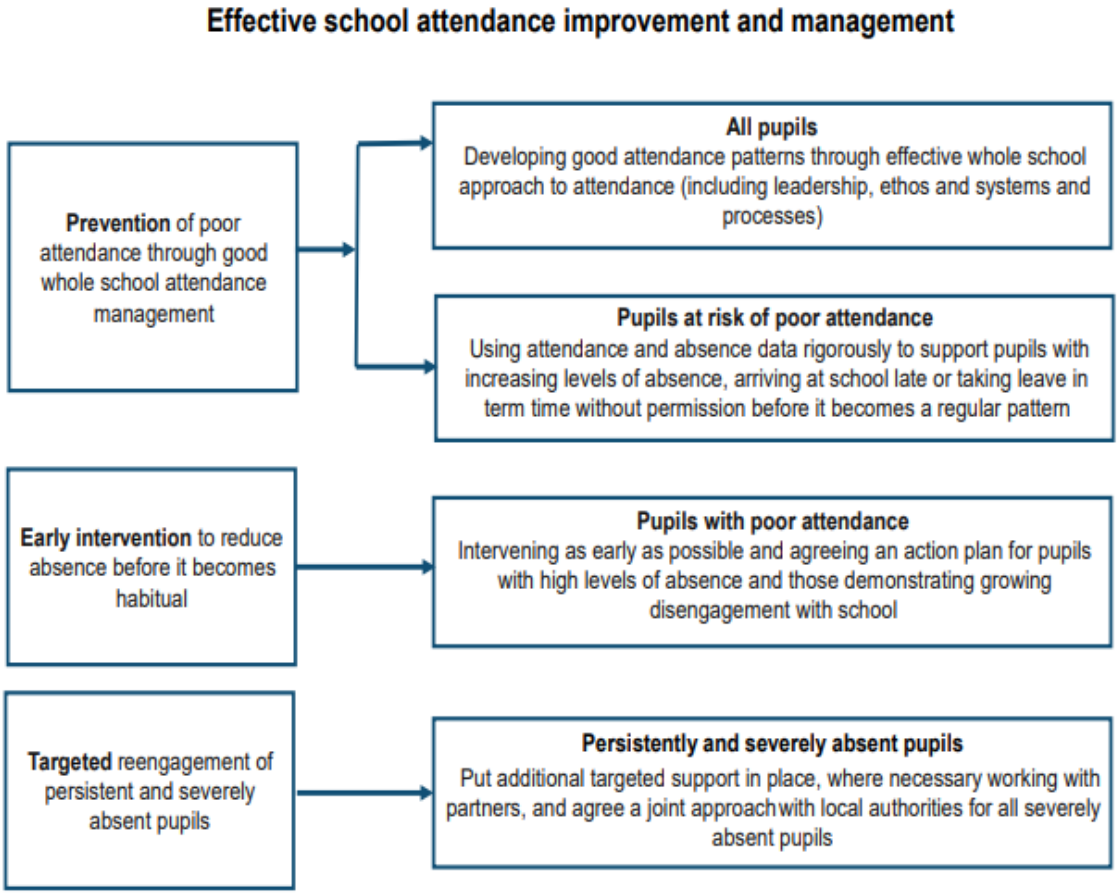
6. School Commitment

All members of school staff are required to attend mandatory attendance training sessions, improving attendance for pupils is considered "Everybody's responsibility". There will be enhanced training packages proportionate to role. It is fully understood that all staff contribute to creating a culture and ethos that promotes good attendance for pupils.

Pope Francis CMAT has produced an attendance toolkit for all schools to use, based on the resources produced by the Department of Education – Improving School attendance toolkit.

Every school will ensure their attendance champion attends Trust Attendance Task Force meetings held twice a term to monitor and review attendance strategies.

All schools are committed to ensuring that they listen and support parents and carers to improve their child's attendance and a supportive approach is taken to remove barriers. Every school will use the recommended approaches found in Working Together to Improve School attendance as set out below:



Every school strives to achieve 100% attendance for all pupils, and every school has a goal to ensure that whole school attendance is at least 97%. This means that on average every pupil has not missed more than 6 days from school.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Pope Francis CMAT** – Writes and approves the policy, monitors compliance and Trust-wide performance, advises schools on matters related to school attendance and provides support as required. Provides training for schools to improve attendance aligned to roles and responsibilities. Hosts Trust Attendance Task Force meetings to secure strategic planning of operations. Provides a forum for schools to discuss complex cases via a Team around child with complex barriers to attendance. Liaison with external agencies when appropriate.

- **Local Governing Body** – ensures implementation of the Trust attendance policy, reviewing the effectiveness of the implementation through attendance data analysis and holds school leaders to account.

- **Headteacher** – promotes a school ethos that promotes and celebrates good attendance, ensures strategies are in place to promote and implement the attendance policy. Monitor the schools offer to ensure the delivery of an engaging and personalised curriculum making school unmissable and irresistible for pupils. Monitor attendance data and punctuality via reports from the attendance champion. Determine if absences should be authorised. Report to the Local governing body attendance levels, including persistent and severely absent pupils.

- **Attendance Champion (SLT)** – Ensures the Trust attendance strategy is implemented with fidelity. Lead initiatives to promote attendance throughout the school including rewards that are valued by pupils. Analyse attendance data over time so that half termly strategic plans can be made to anticipate attendance patterns and make early interventions to promote and secure good attendance. Review attendance data daily to ensure effective deployment of resources and make changes to planned strategic interventions where appropriate. Ensure that appropriate interventions are taken place and tracked with an intervention tracker. Oversee the arrangements for attendance review meetings and attendance support plans. Quality assures attendance support plans. Critically review and evaluate impact of interventions, including reduced timetables and alternative provision of education. Ensure that the school is compliant with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on Children Missing Education (CME) and follows local authority protocols. Ensures the school complies with the local authority protocols when requesting a legal intervention.

- **Attendance Officer/Administrator** –Monitors registration at each session and ensures any missing marks are quickly resolved to ensure pupils are safe. Be the first point of contact for parents/carers and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments. Monitor attendance, daily, weekly, half termly, termly and yearly contacting parents/carers of pupils who are absent, have attendance that is a cause for concern to challenge absences and encourage an early return to school. Ensure first day absence processes are followed. Ensure registers are completed and report and challenge where necessary. Ensure all school staff and pupils are made aware of their own attendance and school and group attendance. Where appropriate make home visits to pupils. Make referrals to the local authority. Issue appropriate sanctions to pupils for whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern. Manage arrangements for pupils who need to attend appointments during school time. Work with the attendance champion to maintain an accurate intervention tracker and half termly strategic plan for attendance that is regularly reviewed. Attend Trust Attendance Task Force meetings. Lead attendance support meetings and develop action plans involving the child, parents/carers and other agencies where attendance and/or punctuality

is a risk. (Absence is at, or at risk of being, 10% or more). Coordinate the support plan for pupils who are returning to school after a long absence, co-ordinate and collate the documentation required by the local authority for pursuing a legal intervention. Ensure requests for issuing penalty notices are tracked.

- **Pastoral Leaders / Teachers / Form Tutors / Class Teachers** – Maintain accurate and timely registers and promote and encourage attendance daily, raise concerns early. Ensure attendance data provided is shared regularly and repeatedly with pupils. Engage in positive micro interventions with pupils for whom attendance is a concern. Be aware of attendance patterns and trends for groups and individuals of pupils and report any concerns to attendance staff. Ensure any communications regarding attendance or punctuality are delivered appropriately and timely to attendance/administrative colleagues or information for pupils. Be alert and deal with any signs of dissatisfaction which could result in poor attendance or punctuality and ensure it is reported to other colleagues.

- **Parents/Carers** – Be aware it is an offence for pupils to be absent from school without a valid reason. Be aware that only the school can determine if an absence is "authorised". Be aware that school attendance has a direct link to academic achievement. Ensure your child attends punctually, every day dressed in full uniform, ready and equipped to learn. Inform school of any absence and reason for absence by 8:30am for every day of absence or inform of absence duration. Complete the leave of absence request form for any planned absence 4 weeks prior to the absence request date. Avoid arranging holidays during term time and ensure that all medical appointments where possible are arranged after school. Where intervention sessions have been arranged after school and during holidays encourage your child to attend.

- **Pupils** – Try to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality by arriving to school on time every day. Come to school prepared ready to learn and live life to the full. Be proud and celebrate your excellent attendance and punctuality! Be on time for all lessons. Make sure your name is on the register of the lesson you attend and tell the teacher or another member of staff immediately if this is not the case. Ensure your form teacher or another member of staff receives any communication from your parents/carers regarding absence. If there are any barriers to attending school, speak to an appropriate member of staff.

8. Registration:

The school will ensure that an attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session. In addition, secondary school

teaching staff must complete lesson registers in accordance with the arrangements in their school. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

All registers will be marked using the Department of Education Attendance and Absence Codes.

9. Medical or Dental Appointments- Code M

The Trust and school encourage parents to make medical appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, we ask parents to inform the school in advance providing relevant appointment cards/ letters for the session to be authorised as code M. Time away from school should be kept to a minimum and school will authorise a reasonable amount of time for appointments where evidence has been provided.

10. Pupils leaving the school during the school day

Pupils should be collected from the school by an appropriate adult, ideally a parent or carer.

11. Absences

Parents/carers must contact the school before the time specified by their child's school on each day of absence.

Where no information has been received a text message or a phone call is made to inform parents, the child has not attended school in line with first day calling processes to address absence.

Parents/ carers should contact the school every day until the pupil returns to school or alternatively indicate the length of absence and the reasons why it is known the pupil will be unable to attend. In these circumstances a “check in” date must be agreed when the absence will be reviewed.

If no communication from parents has been received and a child has been absent, then a safeguarding home visit will be carried out no later than 3rd day of absence.

Failure to provide a reasonable explanation within 5 days of the start of the absence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised. In these circumstances legal interventions may be considered.

It is not the decision of the parent/ carer if absences are authorised, these decisions are made by the headteacher in accordance with Department of Education regulations and guidance.

Attendance over one whole school year for each pupil

Absence	Missed Days
0%	0
2%	Less than 4 days/ 8 sessions
3%	Less than 6 days / 11 sessions (school target)
5%	9 ½ days / 19 sessions
10%	19 days / 38 sessions
15%	28 ½ days / 59 sessions
20%	39 days / 76 sessions

Attendance over 5 years for each pupil

Absence	Missed Weeks
10-15%	19 weeks = ½ year missed from school
20%	38 weeks = 1 full year missed from school

12. Child Missing Education

CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

Parents have a duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education.

If parents are proposing to withdraw their child from school, it is important that they supply information to the school about how their child will be continuing to receive suitable education. If a parent's notification to withdraw the child does not satisfy the criteria for deletion (for example, it is not provided in writing or does not specify the date), this may trigger the school to notify the local authority. Notifying the local authority will prompt them to conduct their own informal enquiries alongside the school.

Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action without delay. If school staff have safeguarding concerns about a child, they should take immediate action following their child protection policy and involving their designated safeguarding lead. Where designated safeguarding leads or any staff in schools or local authorities have concerns about a child's welfare, they should immediately consider whether a referral needs to be made to local authority children's social care and, if appropriate, whether to call the police, particularly if there is a concern that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Pope Francis CMAT schools will:

- maintain accurate admission registers and take a proactive approach to monitoring pupils' attendance in line with chapter 2 of Working together to improve school attendance
- do their own initial proactive work to locate a child at risk of becoming a CME, before working jointly with their local authority to conduct further reasonable enquiries to identify their whereabouts – schools should also continue to play their role in conducting joint reasonable enquiries even after they have submitted a CME referral to the local authority.
- work collaboratively with their local authority to return CME in their local area into education – this might also involve working with a child's home local authority, if different
- offer appropriate support to successfully integrate children into their school, including having efficient decision-making processes for admissions in place to prevent delays
- carefully follow guidance on removing or adding pupils' names from or to the admission register, which in some specific cases will involve joint actions to be undertaken between the school and local authority before this decision can be made

13. Term Time leave and Holidays

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 prohibit the granting of leave of absence during term time unless the headteacher considers that the leave is justified by exceptional circumstances.

The request for a leave of absence must be made 4 weeks in advance and should be made using the leave of absence form available on the school website.

Schools will not consider the following to be exceptional circumstances:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Overlap at the beginning or end of a school term
- Working pattern or availability of parental holiday entitlement

Where a leave of absence is granted the Headteacher will decide the number of days the pupil can be away from the school.

Where a leave of absence is not granted and the child fails to return to school by the agreed date the school will refer to the local authority in line with child missing education protocols.

There may be a request to issue a penalty notice to each adult with parental responsibility for each child absence from school

In certain circumstances the school after notifying the local authority may decide to remove the child from the roll of the school.

14. Persistent & Severe Absence

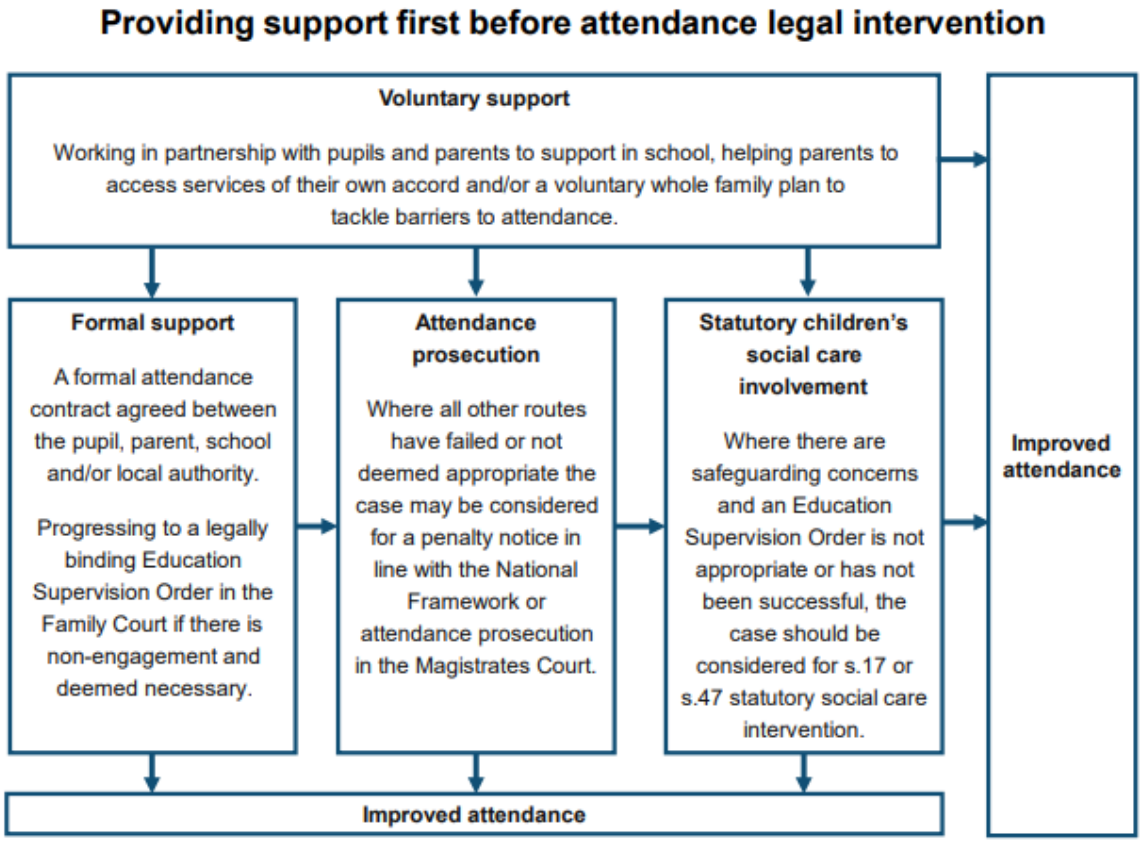
Persistent Absence (PA) – 10% or more absence
If a child is persistently absent from school this will trigger enhanced monitoring via an "Attendance Support Plan", this will include a parental meeting with the school attendance officer and or Trust Attendance Lead.

This enhanced monitoring is to ensure there is a fully supportive plan in place to remove any barriers to good attendance. Where attendance does not improve it may be that

further action will be taken by the school, such as requesting a notice to improve be issued to parents by the local authority.

Severe Absence (SA) – 50% or more absence
Pupils in these categories will be prioritised for intervention, including support plans, attendance panels, and regular review with the local authority.

It is the legal obligation of the Trust and school to consider the use of the full range of legal interventions where all other actions have failed and set out in the following diagram.



This can include

- Penalty Notices (in line with local authority code of conduct).
- Prosecution under Section 444 Education Act.
- Attendance Contracts or Education Supervision Orders.

15. Managing absence / Lateness

Daily Monitoring

- ensure that any pupil who arrives after the register has been taken signs in at the reception office noting a time of arrival or minutes late for purposes of safeguarding
- ensure the attendance register is updated with details of pupils who arrive late including pupils being marked as an unauthorised late if they arrive more than 30 minutes late without an acceptable reason. An unauthorised late can be used to support a legal intervention
- ensure details of pupils and the reasons for the late arrival are communicated to relevant staff via the MIS
- ensure accurate details are noted of parents/carers contacting the school about their child's absence – including the reason for the absence and the likely length of the absence
- coordinate all parents/carers being contacted by telephone who fail to notify the school of their child's absence
- send a text to all parents/carers of pupils arriving late to school, informing them of their child's failure to arrive on time and any relevant consequences
- send a daily email to all staff providing the percentage level of attendance and punctuality each day, broken down by year group and the cumulative attendance for the year at as close to 10am and at the end of the school day
- make phone calls to parents/carers of absent pupils as part of the school's first-day response process
- make follow up calls throughout the day to pupils who have been identified as at-risk, or to challenge absences where appropriate and encourage early return to school
- authorise appointments for pupils with a poor attendance record or contact parents where the schools is not prepared to condone the absence
- escalate any absences causing concern to the SLT link/ attendance team

Weekly Monitoring

- if appropriate take appropriate action in response to repeated lateness, in accordance with the school's procedures
- contact parents/carers by telephone to inform them of the school's concern regarding attendance or punctuality, particularly if there are patterns to absences or lateness
- ensure the interventions tracker is regularly and accurately completed

- review of absence trends, communication with parents, update intervention trackers. All teachers receive updated attendance data via school Power BI reports.

At appropriate milestones

- update of Attendance and Punctuality intervention trackers
- Trust Attendance Task force meetings take place to review and revise half termly attendance strategies for each school and the Trust
- review attendance strategy at SLT, report attendance to standards committees and Trust board
- recognise and celebrate success via letters, prizes to pupils with good attendance (At least 95+%)
- write attendance letters, organise attendance meetings and attendance support plans for those

16. Safeguarding and vulnerable pupils

We recognise that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to poor attendance than others. These groups should be carefully monitored, and intervention should be undertaken with a co-ordinated approach of multi -functional teams.

Pupils with medical conditions, special educational needs or disabilities, young carers, pupils with a social worker or in receipt of pupil premium are likely to require more support but this should not be restricted to only these pupils. Schools should never assume pupils outside of these groups do not require enhanced support and colleagues should remain vigilant.

When a pupil with a social worker is absent without good reason the social worker should be informed or unauthorised absences and support improved attendance. Where schools are considering the use of legal interventions, the view the relevant social worker should be considered although the final decision will be taken by the school in liaison with the local authority school attendance service.

The school should inform the youth offending team of any pupils who are under their care and have unexplained absences.

17. Summary of key actions to safeguard vulnerable pupils

- Attendance concerns for pupils with a **social worker**, EHCP, SEND, or young carers will be escalated promptly
- Any **child missing education** must be reported to the Local Authority after 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence, or sooner if there are safeguarding concerns
- Schools must liaise with social care, health services, and other partners where absence places a pupil at risk
- School attendance teams regularly meet with safeguarding and SEND colleagues to regularly review the attendance of pupils and the effectiveness and provision of interventions to support good attendance

18. Rewards & Celebration

Celebrating attendance is a critical part of our mission to improve attendance and develop a positive school culture. There are ongoing efforts to reward pupils, for example raffles, prizes, experiences widely celebrated and encouraged. Certificates, assemblies, recognition for 100% attendance and significant improvement in attendance are given out at regular milestones in the year.

Attendance league tables across the trust- Examples include:

- Year group competitions to promote attendance
- Trust wide competitions for schools , year groups and form groups.
- Social media recognition and promotion of performance to wider Trust community

19. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board to ensure compliance with legislation, DfE guidance, and KCSIE updates.

Appendix 1

To the Headteacher of

I wish to apply for the below child(ren) to be authorised as being absence from school from ……/……/…… to ……/……/…… (inclusive).

Name(s) of Children	Date of Birth	Form

Reason for requesting absence during term time

I confirm that by signing below, I/we have parental responsibility and are the parent(s) with whom the above named child(ren) live with. I understand if I/we take my child(ren) on holiday in term time without prior authorisation of the Academy, I/we may be issued a £80/£160 Penalty Fine, per parent, per child.

Name of Parent/Carer: …….. **Signature:** ……

Date: ……..

Name of Parent/Carer: …….. **Signature:** ……

Date: ……..

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE WILL NOTIFY YOU OF OUR DECISION BY EMAIL AND/OR LETTER

Office Use Only

☐ Authorised — The Academy agrees to your child being absent from school on the dates specified

☐ Unauthorised — The Academy does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason:

- Reason is not considered exceptional circumstances
- Leave could have been taken during statutory school holidays
- Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months
- Duration and Time of Leave

Staff Name: …… **Signature:** …… **Date:** ……

Appendix 2

School	School Day Start	School registers close after 30 mins *	School Day End	Senior Leaders responsible for championing attendance (Attendance Champion), including email address
St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic Academy	8:40am	9:10am	2:45pm	Mrs C Roberts - C.Roberts@seaca.pfcmat.org
Sacred Heart Catholic Academy	8:40am	9:10am	2:45pm	Mr J Roberts - j.roberts@shca.pfcmat.org
The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco	8:40am	9:10am	2:45pm	Mrs J Aspinall - j.aspinall@sjb.pfcmat.org
Our Lady Queen of Peace	8:30am	9am	3:00pm	Mrs M Henshaw M.Henshaw@OLQP.pfcmat.org
Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary	8:55am	9:25am	3:15pm	Mrs A Fitzgibbon - a.fitzgibbon@olow.pfcmat.org
St Mary's Catholic Primary	8:55am	9:25am	3:15pm	Mrs K Scott - head@stmarys.pfcmat.org
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary	8:55am	9:25am	3:15pm	Mr S Gallagher - s.gallagher@olol.pfcmat.org
St Edmund's and St Thomas' Catholic Primary	8:45am	9:15am	3:15pm	Mr K Loftus – head@sest.pfcmat.org

* After which time unless a satisfactory reason can be evidenced, the absence will be unauthorised and could lead to legal interventions

The school will always prioritise support over legal interventions. However, the school has a duty of care to inform parents/carers that if they do not respond to the advice offered, legal intervention will be pursued.

Details of advice for parents/carers from the Local Authority can be found via the following links:

https://www.sefton.gov.uk/childrens-services/schools-and-learning/school-admissions/attendance/

https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/education-and-schools/attendance-schools

https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/vjjjwn44/lancashire-attendance-handbook-september-2025.pdf