St Barnabas C of E Primary Academy
ATTENDANCE POLICY
2026 – 2027

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 St Barnabas believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 St Barnabas values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school and identify the reasons for poor attendance.

1.4 St Barnabas recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on admissions, safeguarding, anti-bullying, child protection, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy considers the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, and has regard to relevant duties relating to equality, disability and race.

1.5 This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance', through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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
- We will also promote and support punctuality throughout the school day.

2.0 Legal Framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (updated July 2026), including the national framework for parental responsibility measures.

The guidance is based on the following legislation, which set 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2024

It also refers to:

- School Census Guidance and the DfE attendance and absence codes
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools; Working together to safeguard children 2026; and Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools.

3.0 Safeguarding

3.1 Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

3.2 Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families, and difficulties with attendance or punctuality may be signs that something is worrying a child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding matter where this places a child at risk of harm.

3.3 Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour support, Health and Safety, access to the Curriculum and Anti- bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, FGM and CSE.

3.4 More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.5 In order to allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.

3.6 At least annually, we will actively request that parents and carers check and confirm the contact details we have on record so that children can be supported to attend school and that we hold current contact details.

3.7 It is also important for parents inform the school of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances. This includes notifying the school if home circumstances change, including the use of private fostering arrangement so that there is clarity of responsibilities to ensure school support and to prioritise school attendance.

4.0 Categorising Absence

4.1 Where pupils are recorded as absent, the attendance register must accurately record the reason for absence using the appropriate DfE attendance code.

4.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school in accordance with the legal framework and this policy; parents/carers cannot authorise an absence themselves. The school will determine whether an absence is authorised based on the circumstances and the evidence available.

4.3 Parents/carers must advise the school by telephone, email or text on the first day of absence, before 9.00am, and provide an expected date of return. The school may request further information where this is necessary to establish the reason for absence.

4.4 **Absence will be categorised as follows:**

4.4.1 Illness: the school will usually authorise absence due to illness where it is satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend. Medical evidence will not be routinely requested, but may be sought where this is appropriate and proportionate, particularly where there is a pattern of absence or the reason for absence is unclear.

4.4.2 Medical/Dental Appointments: parents/carers should, where possible, arrange appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment wherever practicable. The school may ask for evidence of the appointment where appropriate.

4.4.3 Other authorised circumstances: leave of absence may be granted only where permitted by law and where the circumstances meet the school's criteria, including exceptional circumstances. Requests must be made in advance wherever possible.

4.4.4 Suspended or excluded (no alternative provision made): absence is recorded using the appropriate statutory code where a pupil is suspended or excluded and no alternative provision has been made.

4.4.5 Religious observance: St Barnabas recognises the multi-faith nature of British society. Leave of absence may be granted for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil or their parent/carer belongs, in accordance with the DfE attendance guidance.

4.4.7 Traveller absence: it is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. The specific provisions in Appendix 2 will be followed.

4.4.8 Late arrival: registration begins at 9.00am. Pupils arriving after 9.00am but before the register closes will be marked as present but arriving late (code L). The register will close at 9.30am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be recorded using the appropriate late/absence code (normally U, unless another statutory code applies).

On arrival after the register has closed, pupils must immediately report to the school office so that the school can account for them and safeguard their health and safety. Where there is a valid reason for the late arrival, the school will consider whether another attendance code is required.

4.4.9 Unauthorised absence: an absence will be recorded as unauthorised where none of the authorised absence codes applies or where the school is not satisfied that the reason given justifies authorisation.

4.4.10 A full list of the Department for Education (DfE) attendance and absence codes is provided in Appendix 1.

4.5 All requests for leave of absence during term time, including requests for holidays, will be considered individually and responded to in writing. Leave of absence will only be granted where the law permits it.

4.5.1 Where a pupil fails to return from an agreed leave of absence and the school cannot establish the pupil's whereabouts or expected return, the school will follow the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and relevant Children Missing Education procedures before considering deletion from the admission register.

4.5.2 Where leave of absence is not granted and a pupil is taken out of school, the absence will normally be recorded as unauthorised. Where the legal threshold is met, St Barnabas may request Manchester City Council to consider a penalty notice or other legal intervention in line with the Council's current Code of Conduct and statutory escalation arrangements.

*5.0 **Roles and Responsibilities***

5.1 ***Governance:***

The LAB board is responsible for:

- 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
- Making sure that the schools attendance management system is delivered effectively
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils but adapts processes to pupils' individual needs

5.2 ***The Executive Headteacher:***

The Executive 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
- Requesting statutory action in line with Manchester's Statutory Action Escalation Pathway
- Ensuring effective communication between school, the Local Authority and parents/carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) where there are barriers to attendance which relates to the pupils needs
- Following Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol and the statutory Children missing education guidance when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown or there are concerns that the pupil may be missing education.

5.3 **The designated Senior Leader responsible for School 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff

The designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance is Miss Nelson and can be contacted via the main school office.

5.4 **The Attendance Officer:**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Benchmarking and monitoring 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 local authority and other key stakeholders to tackle persistent and severe absence
- Liaising with the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) as to when a request for statutory action in line with Manchester's Statutory Action Escalation Pathway is appropriate.

The attendance officer is Mrs Ostell and can be contacted via the main school office.

5.5 **Senior Mental Health Lead: Mrs Ostell**

A Senior Mental Health Lead is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight for setting a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people in school
- Action taken aligned to Manchester's Emotional Barriers to School Attendance (EBSA) pathway

5.6 **Class teachers:**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of the day (9.00am) and at 1.00pm; EYFS attendance is recorded at 9.00am and 12.15pm.

5.7 **School office staff:**

School office staff are responsible for:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the pastoral lead to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

5.8 **Parents/carers:** Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- 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 one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Engage with school support aimed at improving school attendance
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting Mrs Ostell or Miss Nelson.

5.9 **Pupils**:

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

6.0 **Attendance Data**

6.1 Use of Attendance Data

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern or cohorts of pupils where attendance is affecting their achievement/outcomes.

Pupil-level attendance data will be collected and reported through the DfE's attendance data systems and national school absence statistics. The school will use current DfE attendance data tools and reporting requirements.

The school will compare attendance data with relevant national and local benchmarks and share analysis with the LAB board. Attendance data will be considered alongside pupil groups, individual circumstances and barriers to attendance.

6.2 *Analysing attendance data*

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
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

6.3 *Using data to improve attendance*

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, 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
- Provide targeted support to pupils whose attendance may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families.

6.4 **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of their possible sessions. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of their possible sessions.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents 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
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

7.0 **Support Systems**

7.1 St Barnabas recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties or barriers in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour, for example bereavement, divorce/separation or incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

7.2 St Barnabas also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, including pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, physical or mental health needs, children with a social worker, young carers, and pupils experiencing other barriers to attendance. The school will consider reasonable adjustments and adaptations where appropriate.

7.3 The school will implement a range of proportionate, supportive strategies to improve attendance. Support will be tailored to the individual circumstances of the pupil and family and may include:

- Manchester's Graduated Approach to Attendance
- Attendance contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Initiating an Early Help Assessment and/or referral to appropriate agencies such as M Thrive or Early Help Hubs
- Pupil voice activities
- Use of Emotional Barriers to School Attendance pathway (EBSA)
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Use of a time-limited part-time timetable only where it is appropriate, exceptional and used as part of a clear reintegration plan, with regular review and a planned return to full-time education.

- Inclusion Strategy Toolkit
- Reintegration support packages

7.4 If a pupil has an Education, Health & Care plan, St Barnabas will communicate with Manchester City Council EHCP Team at an early stage once they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the child's needs

7.5 Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with appropriate support and further unauthorised absence occurs, St Barnabas may consider legal sanctions following Manchester City Council's current Code of Conduct and statutory escalation arrangements. Any decision will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

8.0 ***Legal Sanctions***

8.1 St Barnabas will use a support-first approach to attendance. Where appropriate, the school will work with the pupil, family and relevant services to remove barriers to attendance before considering legal intervention. Decisions about legal sanctions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

8.2 Manchester City Council, upon a request from school, may issue a penalty notice in relation to unauthorised absence where the legal requirements are met. Penalty notices are one of a range of legal interventions and are not an automatic response to poor attendance.

8.3 Before requesting a legal sanction, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. These sessions may be consecutive or sporadic and the period may span different terms or school years.
- Whether the school believes that a parent/carer is deliberately attempting to avoid triggering the national attendance threshold, including through fragmented term-time leave.
- Whether a penalty notice is the appropriate legal intervention to improve attendance for that pupil.
- Whether appropriate support has been offered and whether the family has engaged with that support, where support is appropriate.
- Whether any obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including duties relating to disability, mean that a penalty notice would be inappropriate.

8.4 Each parent who is liable for the pupil's attendance offence(s) may be issued with a penalty notice, subject to the applicable legal requirements and Manchester City Council's Code of Conduct.

8.5 Payment is made directly to the local authority. If a penalty notice is not paid within the required period, the local authority may take further action in accordance with the legislation and its Code of Conduct.

8.6 For a first penalty notice, the amount is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.

8.7 For a second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within 3 years of the first, the amount is £160, payable within 28 days.

8.8 A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty notice. Where the national threshold is met for a third time within that period, alternative legal action will be considered in accordance with the law and Manchester City Council's procedures.

Notice to Improve

8.9 If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents/carers do not engage with offers of support, a Notice to Improve may be issued in line with Manchester City Council's current Code of Conduct. This will set out the concerns, the support offered, the required improvement and the

consequences of further unauthorised absence. The monitoring period will normally be up to 6 weeks, with sufficient improvement determined on a case-by-case basis.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

The following attendance and absence codes are taken from the Department for Education's current guidance and must be used accurately in the school's electronic attendance register.

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
Attending at a place other than at school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registration	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – approved leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)

E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: - In police detention - Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or - Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes (must be cleared at least weekly)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Traveller Family Absence

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444(6), states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues two hundred attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in the year preceding the absence. This applies only when the family proves it is engaged in a trade or business that requires it to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

St Barnabas will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. The school will apply the statutory requirements and Manchester City Council procedures regarding registration, absence and deletion from the admission register.

St Barnabas can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and

inform the school regarding proposed return dates

St Barnabas will authorise absence of Traveller children where the legal criteria are met and the school is satisfied that the family is travelling for work or trade purposes and intends to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

The child is on roll and attending another visited school

Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service

The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate support or statutory action may be undertaken.