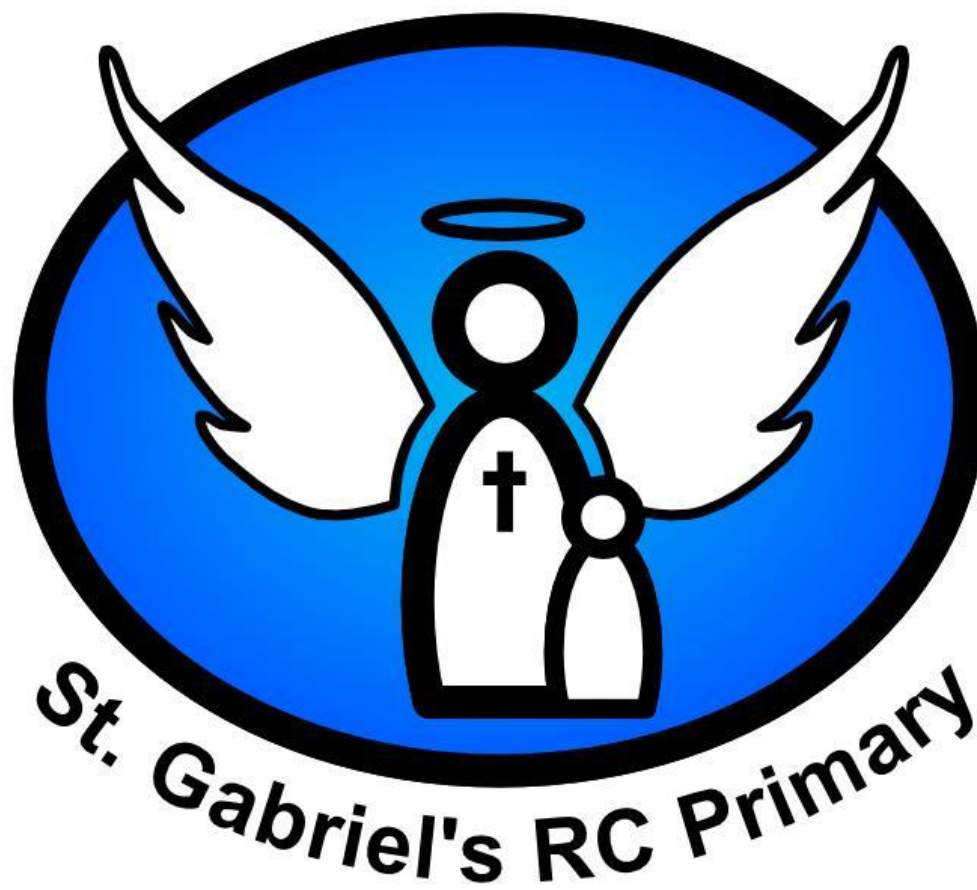




Attendance Policy

Updated: July 2026

Review Date: July 2027

Legal Framework

- Education Act 1996
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations
- Children Missing Education (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- Equality Act 2010
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (Aug 2024)

Data Protection

Attendance data is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information is shared only where legally required for safeguarding or statutory purposes.

Statement of Intent and General Policy

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have (Education Act 1996, Section 7). It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure their child receives that education either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise than at a school (DfE *Working together to improve school attendance*, August 2024).

The school has a statutory duty to promote good attendance and to take appropriate action where attendance causes concern (Education Act 1996, Section 444; School Attendance Regulations). Regular attendance is essential to safeguarding children, promoting educational achievement and ensuring pupils reach their full potential.

Good attendance and punctuality are essential life skills valued by schools, colleges and employers. The school seeks to instil positive attendance habits early, ensuring pupils understand that their presence matters and that they are missed when absent.

The school operates a robust attendance policy based on national evidence linking attendance to attainment (Department for Education). The school's attendance target is 97% and all children are encouraged to achieve this. Where attendance falls below target, the school will take proportionate, supporting and, where necessary, statutory action.

Objectives

- To maximise attendance and punctuality for all children.
- To meet statutory safeguarding duties by knowing the whereabouts of all pupils.
- To identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to resolve any difficulties.
- To analyse attendance data to inform policy, practice and intervention.
- To work closely with and make full use of the support from the Education Welfare Service, School Health and multi-agency teams and to ensure compliance with national attendance legislation and guidance.

What is expected of parents/carers?

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually and must:

- Ensure their child attends school every day unless genuinely unwell.
- Provide a clear, accurate reason for absence before or on the first day.
- Ensure their child arrives on time, properly dressed and ready to learn and provide a reason for any lateness.
- Enter the school grounds via the playground gate and to be in charge of their child until the bell sounds. Children should be in line by the time the bell sounds at 8.40 am and in class no later than the second bell at 8.45 am.
- Notify the school promptly of any changes to contact details.
- Work with the school and Education Welfare Service to resolve attendance concerns.
- Be mindful of key assessment periods e.g. SATs tests.
- Sign and adhere to the Home School Agreement.

Failure to fulfil these responsibilities may result in statutory intervention, including penalty notices or prosecution.

Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school no later than 9:15am on the first day of absence via:

- Parent app
- Telephone
- Email
- In person

Information must include:

- Child's name and class
- Name of the reporting adult
- Full reason for absence

The school has a safeguarding duty to follow up unexplained absences. Failure to report absence may result in home visits or referrals to external agencies.

If absence continues beyond two days, the school may request further information. Medical evidence may be requested where:

- Attendance falls below 90%
- There are repeated illness absences
- Absence is adjacent to school holidays
- Absence impacts safeguarding or attainment

Medical evidence may include appointment cards, prescriptions, emails or screenshots.

What is expected of school?

The school will:

- Maintain accurate registers in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Monitor attendance daily and identify emerging patterns.
- Act swiftly on unexplained absence.
- Provide early help and reasonable support.

- Make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, medical or mental health needs (Equality Act 2010).
- Refer to the Education Welfare Service where necessary.
- Ensure all actions are proportionate, supportive and lawful.
- Promote and reward good attendance

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences include:

- Illness
- Medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance (no more than 3 days in a school year)
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher

Where possible, medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of the school day or during school holidays. Where this is not possible, it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day and that an appointment card or letter is brought into the school office so the absence can be authorised. Appointments which involve missing a registration period (either am or pm) will be marked as 'M' regardless of the time returning to school. Absence code 'M' is an authorised absence and is considered as an absence when calculating attendance percentages.

Preventing the spread of infection

Children cannot attend school in the following circumstances:

- The child has untreated conjunctivitis
- The child has a high temperature/fever
- The child has untreated head lice
- School follow NHS guidance which requires children to stay home for **at least 48 hours** after the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea. This does not include reflux, food intolerances, known medical conditions or sickness/diarrhoea not related to illness/infection.
- The child has an infection and the recommended exclusion period has not yet passed

Unauthorised Absence

In 2013, the Education Regulations removed references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments made clear that **head teachers may not grant any leave of absence** during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist. 'Exceptional circumstances' can be described as rare, significant, unavoidable, short and that the absence could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Reasons for exceptional circumstances should be put in writing to the Headteacher for consideration by the Governing Body and no more than 5 days will be authorised. This absence will be marked as a 'C' code.

Family holidays during term time are classed as unauthorised absence and will be marked as a 'G' code.

Other unauthorised absences include shopping, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent(s)/siblings unwell and any unsatisfactory or no reason provided for absence will be marked as an 'O' code. School supports the view that every day in school makes a difference and discourages parents from taking children unnecessarily out of school.

If a child is absent and no contact has been made by the parent or carer to clarify the reason for absence the absence will be marked as 'O' which is unauthorised. If a reason is supplied at a later

date, it is at the discretion of the school as to whether the mark is amended. Following the first day of absence reporting procedure ensures the safety and wellbeing of all of our pupils. Unauthorised absence will be followed up with home visits carried out, in particular prior to and at the end of school holiday periods and where there are linked sibling absences. Medical evidence is required for absence of more than 3 days at either end of a school holiday.

All unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice (see Penalty Notice section below).

In line with Children Missing Education regulations, a pupil may be removed from roll:

- After 20 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence
- Following reasonable enquiries
- With notification to the Local Authority

Persistent Absentees

A child who has an attendance figure of 90% or below is classed as a Persistent Absentee and legal action may be taken.

Where parents/carers are struggling to get their child to school, the School Pastoral Manager will provide early help support, signpost families to appropriate agencies and seek guidance from the school Education Welfare Officer where needed.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices will be issued where there are 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) within a rolling 10 school-week period.

- First offence: £160 per parent per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days)
- Second offence (within 3 years): £160 (no reduction)
- Third offence: prosecution, fine up to £2,500

Full details are provided on the government website.

A school week comprises of any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Flight details or holiday booking confirmations may be requested if a child is taken out of school during term time where there is a dispute regarding the reason provided for absence, for example, illness reported prior to or following a holiday of 1 to 4 days.

Response to Absence

Unexplained absence is treated as a safeguarding concern. If contact cannot be made, the school may:

- Conduct home visits
- Contact the Police
- Refer to Children's Social Care

This is in line with statutory safeguarding guidance.

Lateness

School doors open at 8.40 am and close at 8.45 am. All classroom doors are locked once the second bell sounds and pupils have entered the building. Anyone arriving after the bell should enter the school via the front door and report to the office. Lateness is classed as any child arriving after 8.45 am and up to 9.15 am when registers close. They will have an 'L' mark entered on the register with the number of minutes late recorded and will keep their attendance mark for the morning.

Arriving after 9:15 am when the registers close will result in a child receiving a 'U' code which is an unauthorised absence mark for the whole morning session. Persistent levels of unauthorised absence due to lateness may result in a penalty notice being issued.

Lateness is monitored weekly and letters are sent home where there are patterns of regular lateness, informing parents of the anxiety and disruption caused to the child and the class as a whole

The end of the school day is 3:15 pm. Parents who are late collecting their children at the end of the school day will be contacted by the school office. Any child not collected will be taken to the school's After School Club and charged. If the parent has not been in contact by the end of After School Club at 5:45pm, a phone call and/or referral will be made to Children's Social Care. If parents persistently fail to collect children on time, this may result in a referral being made to Children's Social Care.

SEND, Mental Health, Reasonable Adjustments and Wellbeing

The school recognises that attendance difficulties may arise from:

- Special educational needs
- Disability
- Mental health or emotional needs

The school will:

- Make reasonable adjustments
- Implement attendance support plans
- Follow EBNA (Emotionally Based Non-Attendance) guidance
- Avoid penalising pupils where attendance issues arise from protected characteristics

The school follows *Rochdale Borough Council's Emotionally Based Non-Attendance (EBNA) Guidance for schools* which supports children who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors (such as anxiety or depression), often resulting in prolonged absences from school. The Pastoral Manager and school staff will initially meet with the child and parents to create an attendance support plan with individualised support. This is followed up with a review meeting and, if further support is needed, then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

Where exceptional health conditions exist such as operations and recovery, isolation, mental health and safety risks, the Headteacher and Pastoral Manager will consult with the school Education Welfare Officer and other agencies to ensure alternative provision such as home tuition is put in place with an authorised agency.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Pastoral Manager works closely with the Education Welfare Service to improve the attendance of all children. Termly review meetings are held with the school Education Welfare Officer to discuss attendance concerns and next steps.

There are different strategies used by the Education Welfare Service to support families and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. There is a graduated response, starting with providing information and advice, letters, phone calls, target days, home visits, attendance meetings, Legal Enforcement Attendance Panels, penalty notices and ultimately court action.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Rewards

The school response to absence is conducted in an age appropriate way. If a child's attendance is showing cause for concern, the Pastoral Manager will contact the family to ascertain the reasons for poor attendance or lateness. In older age groups, sanctions may be levied against the child for persistent lateness e.g. missing playtime.

Daily

- Registers are completed electronically by the teachers which are verified by the Administrator with details of absences and lateness recorded.
- Teachers have data available to understand how well their class attendance is contributing towards the school target. They should comment about the importance school attendance has on attainment, everyone being on time etc.
- The Pastoral Manager will follow up unauthorised absences with phone calls to parents. Where appropriate, a home visit will be carried out.
- The Pastoral Manager will monitor any health related issues affecting attendance and make relevant suggestions to teaching staff concerning this e.g. hand washing. School Health will also be contacted for advice and support.

Weekly

- Weekly attendance bears are used to promote good attendance, with a class from Key stage 1 and Key stage 2 being awarded a bear for the highest whole class attendance in the week. This is celebrated each week at the school's celebration assembly.
- Classes with the highest attendance are highlighted in the school newsletter.
- Children are rewarded with 10 minutes extra playtime on days where there is 100% whole school attendance.
- The school newsletter, parent app and website are used to inform parents of whole school attendance, key stage attendance winners and to promote positive attendance messages, thanking parents for their efforts.
- Pastoral Manager works in partnership with parents and carers, offering early help support and advice to families with attendance or punctuality issues.
- 'Guidance for Reporting your Child's Absence' sent to parents whose children have been absent and not provided school with a reason for absence.

Termly

- Analyses/reporting of attendance data which is shared with Headteacher and Governors.
- Review meetings with the school Education Welfare Officer.
- Targeted attendance days provided by Education Welfare Officer.
- Attendance and punctuality letters sent to parents.
- Parents and carers communicated to about their child's attendance and punctuality formally three times a year; twice at parent conferencing and also as part of the end of year school report.

Yearly

- Where medical evidence is requested for absence, this will continue until the child achieves the school attendance target of 97% at the end of the academic year.
- 97% to 100% attendance certificates and prizes are presented to the children in the final end of year assembly.
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|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Bronze awards: | 97% to 98.5% attendance |
| Silver awards: | 98.51% to 99.99% attendance |
| Gold awards: | 100% attendance |