

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: May 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2029	

1. Vision and ethos

At St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, excellent attendance is central to our commitment to ensuring that no child is left behind.

Inspired by the values of faith, hope and love, we work in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance so that every child can flourish academically, socially and spiritually.

Excellent attendance:

- supports safeguarding
- promotes wellbeing and belonging
- strengthens relationships
- enables strong academic progress
- ensures pupils benefit fully from our knowledge-rich curriculum

Our expectation is that all pupils achieve at least 96% attendance or better.

2. Legal framework

This policy reflects statutory guidance including:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024)

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Education Act 1996

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly.

3. Attendance as safeguarding

At St Vincent's, attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Attendance is monitored as part of our safeguarding systems. Patterns of absence are reviewed regularly and may trigger safeguarding action where appropriate.

Where concerns arise:

- the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed
- support is offered early
- external agencies may be involved where necessary

Failing to attend school regularly may be considered a safeguarding concern.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher:

- leads attendance strategy across the school
- monitors attendance data regularly
- works with families to remove barriers
- liaises with the Local Authority where needed
- ensures compliance with statutory guidance

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- monitors attendance as part of safeguarding oversight
- identifies patterns linked to vulnerability
- supports early intervention planning

All staff:

- promote high attendance expectations
- monitor pupil attendance daily
- identify early concerns
- communicate with parents promptly

The school office:

- maintains attendance registers
- carries out first-day contact procedures
- records absence reasons
- supports communication with families

The Local Governing Body:

- monitors attendance termly
- reviews persistent absence data
- reviews attendance of vulnerable groups
- provides challenge and support to leaders

5. Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a culture of strong attendance is everyone's responsibility.

At St Vincent's we:

- promote attendance through newsletters and communication
- celebrate strong attendance in assemblies
- recognise improvement as well as high attendance
- work proactively with families
- ensure children feel safe, known and supported

Excellent attendance helps pupils feel that they belong, are safe and are ready to learn.

6. Expectations of parents and carers

Parents must:

- ensure children attend school daily
- ensure children arrive on time
- inform the school on the first day of absence
- provide reasons for absence
- provide medical evidence where appropriate
- avoid term-time holidays

Parents cannot authorise absence. Only the school can do this.

7. Reporting absence

If a child is absent parents must:

- contact the school on the first morning
- provide the reason for absence
- keep the school updated if absence continues

Medical evidence may be requested where absence:

- becomes frequent
- follows a pattern
- falls below expected attendance levels

8. First-day response procedures

Where a pupil is absent without explanation:

The school will:

- check registers promptly
- contact parents immediately
- follow safeguarding procedures if contact cannot be made

If concerns remain:

appropriate safeguarding action will be taken in line with Children Missing Education procedures.

9. Types of absence

Absence is classified as either:

Authorised absence

Examples include:

- illness
- medical appointments
- exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher

Unauthorised absence

Examples include:

- holidays during term time
- unexplained absence
- arriving after registers close
- avoidable absence without valid reason

Unauthorised absence may lead to Local Authority enforcement action.

10. Term-time leave

Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Requests must:

- be made in advance
- be submitted in writing
- be approved by the Headteacher

Holidays during term time will not normally be authorised.

Penalty notices may be issued where appropriate.

11. Persistent absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when attendance falls below 90%.

Absence at this level significantly affects progress and wellbeing.

Where attendance falls towards this level the school will:

- meet with parents
- identify barriers
- agree support strategies
- monitor progress closely

Where necessary, the Local Authority may become involved.

12. Monitoring attendance of vulnerable groups

Attendance is monitored carefully for:

- pupils with SEND
- pupils eligible for Pupil Premium
- pupils subject to safeguarding support plans
- pupils with medical needs
- pupils joining the school mid-year

Support is put in place quickly where patterns begin to emerge.

13. Our graduated response to attendance concerns

St Vincent's uses a supportive staged response.

Universal support

All pupils benefit from:

- strong routines

- high expectations
- first-day calling
- attendance celebration
- positive relationships

Targeted support

Where concerns emerge:

the school may provide:

- parent meetings
- attendance letters
- pastoral support
- SEN review where appropriate
- Early Help referral if needed

Intensive support

Where attendance does not improve:

the school may involve:

- Team Around the Family meetings
- attendance contracts
- Early Help services
- Education Welfare involvement
- Local Authority enforcement procedures

Support is always prioritised before enforcement action wherever possible.

14. Punctuality

The school day begins at 8:45am.

Children arriving after this time must report to the school office.

Registers close shortly afterwards in line with statutory requirements.

Persistent lateness:

- disrupts learning
- affects progress
- may lead to further action where necessary

15. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored regularly by school leaders.

Parents may be contacted where attendance:

- falls below expected levels
- shows concerning patterns

- begins to decline

Attendance concerns may lead to:

- meetings with parents
- support plans
- Local Authority involvement where appropriate

16. Partnership with families

We work closely with families to support attendance.

This includes:

- early conversations
- practical support
- pastoral support
- signposting services
- partnership meetings

We believe attendance improves most successfully when school and families work together.

17. Children Missing Education (CME)

Where a pupil cannot be located or contact cannot be made:

the school will follow Local Authority Children Missing Education procedures immediately.

18. Monitoring and review

Attendance data is reviewed:

- weekly by leaders
- termly by governors
- regularly with Local Authority partners where appropriate

This ensures early intervention and strong safeguarding oversight.

Appendix 1

First-Day Response Procedures (Safeguarding Flowchart)

Purpose:

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils through prompt identification of unexplained absence.

Step 1 — Register check

Registers are completed at the start of the school day.

The school office checks:

- absence messages received
- emails
- phone messages
- medical notifications

Step 2 — First contact

If no explanation has been received:

The school will:

- telephone parents/carers
- send email where appropriate
- check emergency contact numbers

Step 3 — Internal checks

If contact cannot be made:

Staff may:

- check with siblings in school
- check with class teacher
- check previous attendance patterns

Step 4 — Safeguarding escalation

If a pupil cannot be located and concerns remain:

The school will:

- inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- follow safeguarding procedures
- follow Children Missing Education procedures where appropriate
- contact the Local Authority where necessary

Where risk is identified, the police may be contacted.

Attendance is treated as a safeguarding priority.

Appendix 2

Attendance Monitoring Thresholds

Attendance is reviewed regularly by school leaders.

The following staged response is used to support families.

Attendance Level	School Response
96%+	Expected attendance level
95%	Attendance monitored
94–92%	Parent contact / discussion
Below 92%	Attendance support meeting
Below 90%	Persistent absence procedures begin

Support is offered at every stage.

Appendix 3

Graduated Attendance Support Pathway

St Vincent's follows a staged approach in line with DfE guidance.

Stage 1 — Early Support

Where attendance begins to decline:

The school may:

- contact parents
- discuss concerns
- identify barriers
- offer pastoral support
- review SEND needs where appropriate

Stage 2 — Targeted Support

Where attendance does not improve:

The school may:

- hold formal attendance meetings
- agree attendance targets
- involve Early Help services
- begin Team Around the Family planning

Stage 3 — Intensive Support

Where attendance remains a concern:

The school may:

- involve the Education Welfare Officer
- agree attendance contracts
- request Local Authority involvement

Support remains the priority.

Stage 4 — Statutory Intervention (Local Authority)

Where support has not improved attendance:

The Local Authority may consider:

- Notice to Improve
- Penalty Notice
- Parenting Contract
- Legal proceedings (Education Act 1996)

This decision is made by the Local Authority.

Appendix 4

Term-Time Leave and Penalty Notices

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Penalty notices may be issued where there are:

- 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) within a 10-week period
- unauthorised holidays
- repeated unauthorised absence

Penalty notice rates (per parent per child):

Payment window Amount

Within 21 days £80

Within 28 days £160

Failure to pay may result in legal proceedings.

Appendix 5

Lateness Procedures

The school day begins at 8:45am.

Children arriving after this time must report to the school office.

Registers close shortly afterwards in line with statutory guidance.

Persistent lateness:

- disrupts learning
- affects progress
- is recorded and monitored
- may lead to meetings with parents

Example impact over one academic year:

Daily lateness Learning time lost

5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6.5 days
15 minutes	10 days
20 minutes	13 days
30 minutes	19 days

Every minute counts.

Appendix 6

Children Missing Education (CME)

Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be confirmed:

The school will:

- attempt immediate contact with parents
- inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- follow Local Authority CME procedures
- share information where required

This process supports safeguarding responsibilities.

Appendix 7

Roles and Responsibilities Overview (Quick Reference for Governors)

Role	Responsibility
Headteacher	Strategic attendance leadership
DSL	Attendance safeguarding oversight
School Office	First-day response procedures
Teachers	Daily monitoring and communication
Governors	Termly attendance monitoring and challenge

Governors receive attendance updates termly including:

- whole school attendance
- persistent absence figures
- vulnerable group attendance
- impact of support strategies