

**Dean Gibson Catholic Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**



***Guided by the Holy Spirit, we listen, learn and care.***

**Date: 14th Feb 23**

**Signed by the Chair of Governors:** 

**Review date: 13th Feb 24**

Dean Gibson Catholic Primary School is a member of the Mater Christi Multi Academy Trust. This Trust is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. Company registration number 13272608

It is an apostate of the Roman Catholic Church under the episcopal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Lancaster. Registered Office: The Education Centre, Balmoral Road, Lancaster, [LA1](https://suite.endole.co.uk/explorer/postcode/la1) [3BT](https://suite.endole.co.uk/explorer/postcode/la1-3bt).

**OUR SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

At Dean Gibson Primary School we believe that every child is a unique creation of God. We promise to provide education opportunities and experiences to enrich learning and wellbeing of the children together with the whole school community, by following the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is the school’s aim that the children become well rounded, confident individuals, with an understanding of gospel values as preparation of the world of work and life.

1. **Statement of intent**

Dean Gibson Catholic Primary School (hereafter referred to as “the school”) seeks to ensure that all its children receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his or her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Good attendance is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills they will need and reach their full potential. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which children, staff and parents can work in partnership.

1. **Key Principles**
* Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child’s legal entitlement
* It is a parent’s/carer’s legal responsibility to ensure this happens
* Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life
* Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents
* All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable
* These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation
1. **Aims of the Policy**
* To safeguard the welfare, health, social and e motional development of children
* To reduce persistent absence
* To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
* To promote commitment to education and high achievement
* To maximise the potential of every individual pupil
* Ensure robust systems are in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality
1. **Operating the Policy**
* The school is committed to improving attendance, both amongst those whose attendance is poor (90% and below) and those whose attendance requires improvement (90-95%), and this will comprise a key part of our School Development Plans
* The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention when a problem is identified
* The school will make appropriate and timely interventions on attendance issues, working with outside bodies where required, with a strong focus on persistent absence
* All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and work closely with families to encourage good attendance
* The school will encourage good attendance among children through a system of rewards
* The school Governors and the Trust will monitor attendance closely and work with the Headteacher and Attendance Officer on attendance issues
* We will ensure that all parents are aware of their legal obligations regarding attendance, and will support them in ensuring good attendance for their children
* This policy is available on the school website and reminders will be published on newsletters, text messages and other communications
1. **Why regular attendance is so important**
* Everyone in the school community needs to be aware of the result of poor attendance on children enjoying and achieving
* Poor attendance can lower a child’s confidence, self-esteem, security at school and their academic success
* Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class
* To discharge the school’s duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of our ability
* The school will work together with parents and the Local Authority and Children’s Services, and other external agencies, to improve attendance so we can all help all children to achieve their full potential.
1. **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, children and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

* Share details on attendance in regular newsletters and report to parents each term on their children’s attendance percentage and punctuality rate, and how this relates to attainment
* Celebrate good attendance by instituting competition between Year Groups, with the winners to be announced at the weekly Celebration Assembly with a class reward linked to this
* Award certificates for 95%+ attendance each term
* Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued
* Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence. It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils. Our school will ensure the child is re-integrated into the routine in a stress free way. This is achieved by peer support, “buddy” friends, liaison with parents and the child, and/or one to one sessions with a designated member of staff.
* Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child’s education. All new parents are introduced to the Attendance Policy through the Reception information starter pack.
* This policy and information on attendance is also accessible on the school website.
* Posters promoting attendance are put up around school and on the newsletter.
1. **Registering and Monitoring Attendance**
* All registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions in school. Teachers will perform this task as soon as the morning or afternoon session begins.
* The office staff will monitor attendance on a daily basis and will report to the Head teacher/Attendance Officer with concerns
* Registers are recorded electronically, as this will give us an instant analysis of attendance and punctuality. This will be looked at by the Headteacher/Attendance Officer regularly.
* At the end of the academic year parents will be given a copy of their child’s attendance record for the year. Termly, parents will also be given their child’s attendance percentages and what this equates to in terms of lost learning. The Headteacher will also share the attendance record with parents throughout the year if there are concerns.
* Attendance will be discussed at local Governing Body meetings and will be included in the Headteacher’s Reports.
1. **Lateness**
* The school policy is to encourage punctuality but actively discourage lateness as it seriously disrupts lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded and notes added if information is available as to why the child was late.
* The timing and minutes of lateness will be recorded from 9am.
* The school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. A pupil who arrives late must come to the office with their parents and state the reason for being late. This information will be recorded in the notes section on Arbor.

**9a Managing Lateness**

* If a child has a persistent late record, the parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or attendance officer to resolve the problem.
* If a child is late more than five times per half-term, then a letter will be sent home, unless the school is aware of any exceptional circumstances
* All letters concerning punctuality and attendance will be copied to the child’s file on Arbor.
* If a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer.

**9b Collection at the End of the School Day**

* If a parent is late collecting their child, the child will wait outside the school office in the alcove area until 3:45pm.
* At 3:45pm, the child will be transferred to After School Club, where a charge will be made for the use of this facility.
* When parents arrive to collect their children, they will have to sign them out and give a reason for being late. If a parent is going to be late, we ask that they phone the school and inform them of when they will be arriving and why they are late.
* The school discourages late collection of children as it can be distressing for very young children and presents a staffing issue for the school. We understand there are exceptional circumstances when a parent or carer will be late, but if a persistent pattern of late collection arises the Headteacher will speak to parents and may write a letter home concerning late collection.
* If a child or children are not collected and their emergency contacts details are not current, or contact cannot be made with those listed on the contacts register, the school may choose to involve Social Services.

**10 Types of Absence**

* Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about the cause of any absence is always required.
* Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school’s view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (unauthorised absence). It is reasonable for members of staff to ask questions regarding a child’s attendance and punctuality and when appropriate, request evidence to support the reason for absence from school.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes, but is not limited to:

* Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily Truancy before or during the school day
* Absences which have never been properly explained
* Children who arrive at school too late to get an attendance mark
* Shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
* Day trips and holidays in term time
* Excessive illness absence without medical evidence

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993). This is consistent with national legislation.

Categories of absence include:

* **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** - If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as AUTHORISED. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be where confirmation has been received from the parents, or on production of an appointment card. The school will ask parents to try and make dental appointments outside school hours. Medical appointments will be marked as (M) on the register and relevant notes added to the notes section on Arbor
* **Exceptional leave/holidays** – The governors will consider requests for holiday leave during term time. Requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken without permission will be marked as UNAUTHRORISED ABSENCE.
* **Family Bereavement** - The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events, and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

If a child is sick on either side of a holiday the school may request medical evidence to show the child has been ill. This evidence may be a medical appointment card from the doctors.

Parents can support the school and their child/ren in improving attendance by:

* Ensuring early and regular bedtimes.
* Helping with homework

• Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before

• Providing a healthy breakfast

• Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

• Retaining open & honest communication with your child’s school

• Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

**11. Leave During Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child’s schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

* Remember that any savings that may be made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child’s education.
* Absence for holidays is down to the Headteacher and Governing Body's discretion. There is no entitlement to time off in school time to go on holiday. Requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken without permission will be marked as UNAUTHRORISED ABSENCE.
* The Headteacher will monitor registers and will be looking at all unauthorised absences. Information about any parents who take unauthorised holidays will be passed on to the Education Welfare Officer who may issue each parent with a Penalty Notice for each child. The amount of each Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the notice(s) remains unpaid you will be summoned to the Magistrates Court and could be fined up to £2,500 for each offence.
* Where Parents/Carers that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices then take their child/ren out of school again without authorisation from the Headteacher, further Penalty Notices may not be issued. In these cases, the matter will be referred to the Participation Team for each parent/carer to be summonsed the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A), Education Act, 1996.

**12. Managing Absence**

Attendance is monitored on a daily and weekly basis.

* If the school has continued concern regarding the child’s attendance after speaking to parents, the school will inform the Local Authority of their concerns.
* Those families referred to the Headteacher may be involved in an Attendance Panel, which involves the school taking early intervention when there is an area of concern regarding a child’s attendance.
* During this process, Parents are informed of improvement that needs to be made over a specific time frame. Where parents fail to take their responsibilities seriously or no improvement is brought about in the child’s attendance within a specific time frame, prosecution proceedings will be initiated.
* The attendance of those children involved in the Attendance Panel system will be monitored very closely.

**12a Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

* A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and parental support and co-operation is needed to tackle this.
* If a pupil’s attendance falls below 90%, parents will be contacted via text regarding their child’s school attendance. If attendance falls below 85% then a letter will be sent home and an attendance plan may be put in place.
* If attendance falls below 80% then a meeting with parents will be initiated and a referral may be made to the Local Authority Access and Inclusion team if attendance fails to improve.
* The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absenteeism mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.
* Persistent Absentees are tracked and monitored carefully through our system. All Persistent Absenteeism cases are also made known to the Local Authority.

**12b Missing Children**

* It is the duty of all who work in the education service to secure the safety of children in their charge.
* If the school has concerns about a child who is missing, then we will report our concerns to the relevant agencies.

**12c Telephone Numbers**

* There are times when we need to contact parents about different matters, including absence, so the school must have up-to-date contact details at all times.
* It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school of updated contact details
* Where an issue arises with contact details, the school will seek to communicate with the parent at the end of the day, or through other means, to establish new contact details
* There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

**13 Absence Procedure**

**First Day Absence Contact**

* Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness.
* Parents are requested to try to inform the school **before 8.45am** if their child is too unwell to attend school.
* If the school does not receive notification, we will make contact on the first day of absence to try to ascertain the reason for absence - if contact is still not made then there may be a Home Visit.
* First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible.
* If the child is still too unwell to attend the following day(s), the parent will need to telephone the school again before 8.45am to inform of them of this second day of absence. The office will do this if no contact is made by the parent.
* Each day the child is ill, the parent must confirm continued illness. The office staff will make contact each day if no notification is made by the parent
* If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the school can authorise the absence. On return to school, the parent must put in writing the reason for absence in addition to telephoning the school on each day of absence.

**Continuing Absence Procedures**

* If after one day of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. We may also conduct a home visit.
* In the event of an absence of two or more days without contact from the family, a further home visit will be made, either by the Headteacher, and a referral to Children’s Services will be made to alert the appropriate agencies of our concerns.

**Ten Days’ Absence**

* We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without a sufficient explanation for 10 consecutive days.
* Where this is the case, the school will contact the Access and Inclusion Team to notify them of our concerns, at which point the child may be designated as child missing from education (CME). This information will be forwarded to all relevant agencies.

**Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures**

* The Attendance Officer and School Office will monitor registers and attendance patterns to identify Persistent Absence (PA).
* The Headteacher will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern.
* Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health
* The Headteacher will meet regularly with designated staff to discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have.
* Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 90% will receive a percentage information text. In the event that there is then further absence from school, a letter to parents will request medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the school to authorise any further absences due to ill health.
* For attendance below 85% a letter will be sent to parents. Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to develop and Action Plan to encourage regular attendance. This may include the involvement of further external agencies if attendance does not improve.

**Reluctant Attenders/School Refusers**

* You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve any issues.
* Colluding with your child’s reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.
* School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that has usually been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.

**14. School Targets and Initiatives**

* The minimum level of expected attendance for this school is 95% and the school will keep parents updated on the newsletter about progress toward this level.
* Our target is to achieve even higher than this standard, as we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.
* Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made and will analyse data to identify any particular patterns of absence, either in individual pupils or groups of pupils.
* Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare officer
* Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information
* We endeavour to drive up attendance by rewarding classes and individual children with good attendance. We keep parents updated on a termly basis on their child’s attendance and publish attendance figures on the newsletter.

**15. Promoting Your Child’s Attendance in School**

Contact the school immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child’s reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child’s difficulties with another professional.

**What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. If your child brings home their Planner or Reading Record each evening, please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

**Early Help**

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families and are actively planned with them. Where appropriate, school may suggest an Early Help to help improve attendance and get a child and their family the support they need. Where this is the case, we will discuss a possible Early Help with parents/carers and hope they will engage with the plan to help improve attendance.

**16. Understanding Attendance Percentages**

100% OUTSTANDING: No days of lost learning over the academic year.

97-99% Very Good: Only 2-6 days of lost learning over the academic year.

95-96% Good: 7-9 days of lost learning over the academic year.

92-94% Good, but room for improvement: 11-15 days of lost learning over the academic year.

90-91% Concerning & less chance of success: 17-19 days of lost learning over the academic year.

86-89% Poor: 21-27 days of lost learning over the academic year.

85% or below: Very poor: 28-38 days of lost learning over the academic year.

**Mater Christi Trust and Insert School Name Attendance Overview**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Percentage Attendance** | **Category of Attendance** | **Actual Attendance** | **Learning Days lost per year** | **Learning hours lost per year** |
| **100%** | **Outstanding** | **190 days** | **0** | **0** |
| **99%** | **Very Good. Best chance of success.** | **188 days** | **2** | **10** |
| **98%** | **186 days** | **4** | **20** |
| **97%** | **184 days** | **6** | **30** |
| **96%** | **Good, although room for improvement.** | **182.5 days** | **7.5** | **37.5** |
| **95%** | **180.5 days** | **9.5** | **47.5** |
| **94%**  | **Needs to improve** | **178.6 days** | **11.4** | **57** |
| **93%** | **176.7 days** | **13.3** | **66.5** |
| **92%** | **174.8 days** | **15.2** | **76** |
| **91%** | **Poor** **There is less chance of success and makes it harder for your child to achieve.** | **173** | **17** | **85** |
| **90%** | **171 days** | **19** | **95** |
| **89%** | **169 days** | **21** | **105** |
| **88%** | **167 days** | **25** | **115** |
| **87%** | **165 days** | **27** | **125** |
| **86%** | **Very Poor Attendance is a serious concern and there will be a huge impact on your child’s learning.** | **161.5 days** | **28.5** | **135** |
| **85%** | **161.5 days** | **28.5** | **142.5** |
| **80%** | **152 days** | **38** | **190** |

**Every Day Matters’ – please give your child the very best life chances by sending your child to school EVERY DAY**