

# Notre Dame Catholic College

180 Great Homer St,  
Liverpool L5 5AF



## Student Attendance Policy

*Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors*

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# Student Attendance Policy

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## Introduction

Notre Dame Catholic College is a school committed to providing a high-quality education to the students whom we are privileged to have entrusted to our care, giving them, in the words of St Julie, “what they need for life”. We are committed to providing a safe environment that embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We recognise that the importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. We understand how important it is to see our students every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment which enables and encourages all students to feel valued and reach out for excellence.

At Notre Dame, we acknowledge the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality for students within Notre Dame so that all student may achieve their very best.

Notre Dame believes that teachers, parents, carers, support staff, students and all members of our community make an important contribution to improving attendance and punctuality. The college, in line with the local authority, considers 97% or higher to be good attendance. This policy sets out how we aim to act early to address patterns of absence and support our parents in their legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends regularly.

## Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 1996 / 2002
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended)
- The Education (Student Registration) England Regulations 2006
- The Education ( Student Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2010/2011/2013/2016
- DfE (2020) ‘School attendance’
- DfE (2016) ‘Children missing education’
- DfE (2021) Keeping children safe in education
- DfE (2021) ‘Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities’
- DfE (2021) ‘Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (Covid-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year)

This policy operated in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

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## Why regular attendance is important

Any absence which affects education and regular absence will seriously affect students' learning. It has been proven that students who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a student missing one half day of lessons per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

The DFE has published a strong link between poor school attendance and low levels of achievement:

Students Attendance	Chance of Achieving 5 Good pass Grades at GCSE
100% - 96%	73% of students achieve 5 good pass grades
96% - 94%	64% of students achieve 5 good pass grades
93% - 90%	55% of students achieve 5 good pass grades
80% - 70%	Only 20% chance of achieving 5 good pass grades
50% and below	Only 6% of students achieve 5 good pass grades

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

## Understanding types of Absence

Notre Dame Catholic College has to record every absence that a student takes from school and this is why it is important that parents / carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by text, email or phone on the first day of absence.

### Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Head Teacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

### Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get their marks
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays,
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Leaving the school premises for no reason during the school day

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This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority.

Notre Dame Catholic College will issue warning letters to parents/carers (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term (this may include when students are late to school). The warning period will cover a period of 20 school days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer the case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice to be issued.

### Persistent Absence

- Students are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before students reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that students can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a student is reluctant to attend or a parent / carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent / carers are asked to contact Mrs P Shrimpton, the Attendance Officer, or their son/daughter's Head of Year in the first instance.

### Expectations of Student

- Student will be expected to attend school
- Students are expected to attend form class to be marked in for registration – form class starts promptly at 08:45 a.m.
- Students are expected to be in school for 08:40 to ensure they can attend their form class on time
- The school expects all students to attend lessons punctually
- Students are expected to clearly answer their name when the register is called out.
- If the student is late they must sign their name and time of arrival on the late sheet
- It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they are marked in

### Expectations of Parent / Carer

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent / carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

As Parent/Carer of a student at Notre Dame we expect you to :

- Ensure your son/daughter leaves for school on time
- Telephone school if your child may arrive late to school giving the reason for lateness
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments make them outside of school hours
- Contact school preferably by 8.45am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.

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- If a text message is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this text to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact the attendance officer or Head of Year if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact
- Ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of two emergency contact details provided)
- Check the school's term dates and do not book family holidays during term times
- Make a request for exceptional circumstances leave of absence in writing to the Headteacher and accept the Headteacher's decision.

### Our School Procedures:

- We will text and telephone the parent / carer of the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 10:30 am.
- Students who have an allocated social worker – the attendance team will inform social workers via email if any student in this cohort is absent.
- If there is no response from parents/cares we will continue to text and telephone the parent/carers and after three days unauthorised absence, a member of school staff or our school's safer police officer will conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family on the first day of absence.
- If a student's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent / carer will be invited to meet the Attendance Officer / Head of Year.
- If absences persist the Attendance Officer will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

### When the Student returns to School

- They will have a "welfare" conversation with their form teacher/Assistant Head of Year / Sr Margaret
- They will be given extra help if needed by the Assistant Head of Year to support their return.
- They will need to collect the work missed as a result of the absence

### Attendance Team Meetings

The Attendance Officer and Educational Welfare Officer will monitor daily attendance and make decisions in relation to letters sent home, visits from the Attendance Officer or Educational Welfare Officer and referrals to Attendance Panels.

The school Attendance Officer and Educational Welfare Officer decide on whether to issue Fixed Penalty Warning Letters and may refer to the Local Authority for prosecution at court.

The Attendance Officer meet weekly with each Head of Year to update and discuss the attendance of the students in their year group.

The Assistant Head teacher (Designated Safeguarding Lead) with the Attendance Officer, Educational Welfare Officer, SENCO, School Police Officer and school nurse will meet monthly and monitor attendance across the school. Students who are a concern are discussed and relevant action is taken.

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## External Agencies

### School's Safer Police Officer

Our School's Safer Police Officer provides support and advice to both the school and parents to ensure that all students are in a safe environment and attend school regularly. The Community Police Officer works with the Attendance Officer and Welfare Officer to run the Acceptable Attendance Agreement (triple AAA) programme. This is a programme that helps students and parents become aware of their attendance percentage. This programme can help prevent having to take legal proceedings which include: Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision orders.

### The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- The Schools Education Welfare Officer is alerted by the school if a student's attendance is below 90%
- The Education Welfare Officer provides support for parents / carers and advice on problems relating to attendance and encourages good communications between home and school.
- The Education Welfare Officer will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the student's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists the Education Welfare Officer will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

## Leave of Absence in Term Time

The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents / carers can receive a Penalty Notice fine for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively.

Head Teachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a child be away from school if the leave is granted.

## Medical Concerns and Medical or Dental Appointment

If any student is absent due to illness a letter should be provided by parents/carers. Prolonged absence will require medical evidence (e.g. doctor's note, hospital appointment card, prescription etc.)

Any medical or dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. If this isn't possible, the appointment should be made at the start or end of the school day in order to minimise absence.

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## Students at risk of persistent absence (P.A.)

The school will ensure it provides support to students at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the SLT will:

Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.

Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.

Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.

Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:

- Sending letters to parents.
- Having a weekly form tutor attendance focus
- Using fixed penalty notices.
- The governing board will engage in attendance panels

Where a student becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome the student back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the student to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the student's parents/carers to discuss progress / Team around Child meeting (where appropriate)
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a student at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the student in line with the school's duty of care.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- All students with social workers including LAC
- Students who are eligible for FSM
- Students with EAL
- Students with SEND

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## Persistent Absence (P.A.)

A student is considered a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for any reason. This equates to 19 schools days which equates to 95 hours of lessons. Students who are persistent absentees will be discussed weekly and may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

## Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving students disrupt lessons. It can be embarrassing for the students arriving late and can encourage future absence. A range of support and sanctions apply to students who arrive late.

## How we Manage Lateness

The school day starts and registers are taken from 8.45am by the Form Tutors and students receive a late mark if they are not in their form group by that time. School recommends that students arrive by 8.40am.

- Students who arrive late to school will be met by an Assistant Head of Year / Head of Year and will be instructed further on actions that will be taken.
- On the first occasion a student arrives late, they will be issued with a pastoral detention in the school.
- If the student continues to arrive late they will be placed in after school detention on Thursday evening from 1 hour rising to 2 hours if punctuality does not improve.

If a parent / carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the school, who will offer support to resolve the problem.

The school day starts at **08:45 am**. Students should be in their form class or assembly at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by **9:15 am**. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom/assembly by this time.
- The register closes at **9:30am**. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- Lesson 4 registers are marked by **1:15 p.m.** Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **1:15pm**. Students will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Students attending after **9:15 am** will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

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## Attendance register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether students are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Student not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant students who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

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## Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a student is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent is not available and the student's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the student from attending.
- The student is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

## Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of students, and understand the importance of continuity in each student's learning.

All students are expected to be in their classes by **9:00am** and **1:00pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, a member of SLT is notified, and the parent/carer will be contacted in order to assess the reasons behind the student not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the student, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school

## Missing Children

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform 'on call' immediately.

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- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- The student will be tannoyed and instructed to report to a senior member of staff
- On call staff and available pastoral staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms
  - The library
  - The school grounds
- If the student has not been found after **15 minutes**, then the parents of the student will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- Pastoral staff will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the student going missing.
- If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the student has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the student to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that students understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behavioural Policy.

Directors of Behaviour will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

## Removal from Roll

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 changes were introduced to the Student Registrations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of the headteacher may decide to instruct staff to remove a student from the school roll for the following reasons listed below. School staff will then inform the Local Authority of any pupil who will be deleted from the register.

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their

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parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order, and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- Have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case.
- Are registered at more than one school, but have failed to attend the school and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.
- Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend school within 10 school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:
  - There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
  - The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days, and:
  - The absence was not authorised.
  - There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.

The LA and school is unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries

### **As a School we are required to send the LA the following information:**

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a student's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the student's destination school and home address if the student is moving to a new school.
- Provide the information to the LA when registering new students, including the student's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give the Attendance Officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local

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authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

## Child Missing Education (CME)

A student is regarded as CME when

- The student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence
- is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days
- The student is no longer at a known address and all efforts to locate them have failed

The student will be **removed** from the admission register when the attendance officer and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

The attendance officer will notify the local authority CME team by completing the appropriate online form.

This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

If there is evidence to suggest the student has moved to a different local authority area, contact should be made with the named person in the new authority using secure communication methods.

## Attendance Rewards

Good attendance will be celebrated by rewarding individuals, groups and classes.

Students with 100% attendance will be invited to attend reward events such as an activity afternoon and entrance into prize draws.

Annual 100% attendance is rewarded via prizes at the whole school annual prizegiving event.

School trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below **90 percent**, these privileges may be taken away. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that students with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

## Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and students to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

The main people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mr P Duffy - Head Teacher

Mrs E Brennan – Senior Assistant Head Teacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs P Shrimpton – Attendance Officer

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## Pastoral Team

### Key Stage 4

Year 11 Head of Year – Mr A Bond  
Assistant Head of Year – Mrs E Garvey

Year 10 Head of Year – Mr A Sweeney  
Assistant Head of Year – Mrs J Littleboy

### Key Stage 3

Year 9 Head of Year – Mr O Appleton  
Assistant Head of Year – Mrs S Doran

Year 8  
Head of Year – Mrs L Smith  
Assistant Head of Year – Ms R Glorman

Year 7 Head of Year – Ms C Wishart  
Assistant Head of Year – Ms C Lee

### 6<sup>th</sup> Form

Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form – Mrs K Nicol  
Assistant Head of Year – Ms J Kildare

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