

# Cardinal Newman Catholic High School

## Attendance Policy 2016-17

### Current Context

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents\* are expected to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time”.

### \*Definition of Parents – DFE Advice on School Attendance

A parent means:

- .All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

### Principles of Cardinal Newman Attendance Policy

At Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping students achieve the best that they can be. Education is important. Students should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. All research shows that students who attend well achieve well.

- ***6 out of 10 students with over 95% attendance (missing no more than 10 days a year) gain 5 GCSE A\* - C grades***
- ***Only 1 in 10 students who are poor attendees gain 5 GCSE A\* - C grades***
- ***2 in every 10 attendees leave school with no qualifications at all***

### Attendance Policy 2016 / 2017

Descriptor	Attendance	Equals absent number of days	Learning hours lost
Excellent	100%	0	0
	99%	2	10
Good	98%	4	20
	97%	6	30
	96%	7.5	37.5
Satisfactory	95%	9.5	47.5
Cause for Concern	90%	19	95
	89%	21	105
	88%	23	115

	<b>87%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Serious cause for concern</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>142</b>
	<b>84%</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>152</b>
	<b>83%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>160</b>
	<b>82%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>170</b>
	<b>81%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>180</b>

The government has laid down guidelines which they expect students at secondary school to achieve in terms of attendance. They are set at **95%** attendance.

**A student will fall below 95% if they miss as little as half a day over a 2 week period**

It is the expectation of the school that all students **will** achieve at least 95% attendance. There are a variety of reasons for students missing school. Some are unavoidable but we would ask that you support us in ensuring that your child's attendance meets both the school and the government's expectations. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out by the school, the parents and the student at an early stage. We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The school undertakes a wide range of measures to support students where attendance at school is an issue. Where there may be an issue and we fail to see an improvement it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the student receives the support required to bring about an improvement. See Appendix 1

### **National Context**

The 1996 Education Act (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by '**regular**' attendance at school or '**otherwise**'. The 2008 Education and Skills Act (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

**The duty on parents is to ensure that their children are educated either a school or 'otherwise'**. Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of '**otherwise**' children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and '**suitable**' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. **(DFE guidance – March 2013)**

### **Daily Procedures: Registration**

Under the 2006 Education Regulations the school is **legally** required to register students twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8.45 and 8.50am and in the afternoon between 1.55 and 2.00pm. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

School starts at 8.40am when all students should be in their form base in preparation for the register being taken at 8.45am. At this time they should collect items for the day and make sure that they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day's activities. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill

Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the school website which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school. If your child tells you that school is to be closed on a day not indicated on the school calendar, please check by telephoning the school.

### **Absence from school**

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an **offence** if the child does not attend school regularly. ***If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone.*** If no message is received we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' visit. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school.

**Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.**

The school will only **authorise** a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school may request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

The Head Teacher may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

The school **may** authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Headteacher in advance to secure authorisation. This **may** include work related interviews and meetings with external agencies (ie- CAMHS). The Headteacher **may** also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

### **Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. These are an **offence** by the parent. Such circumstances include:

- A student not attending school to go shopping for school clothes
- A student not attending school as it is her birthday or the birthday of a family member
- A student not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative
- A student not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member
- A student not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday
- A student not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings
- A student attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons

### **Medical Appointments**

We do appreciate that it is often difficult for parents / carers to obtain written confirmation of medical appointments. Parents / carers can obtain 'Medical Authorisation Cards' from school to take with them to the doctors to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment. (see below) Parents / carers must ensure the card is stamped, dated and signed by the practice to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment. See Appendix 2

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance so a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not.

### **Safeguarding**

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, ie – female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation. In addition if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, ie – social care, police. The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

## CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

### Definition

The DfE defines Children Missing Education as:

*'all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being (suitably) educated otherwise (eg privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)'*

The school follows the Warrington Local Authority procedures for children Missing in Education.

This can be found on the Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board's website.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

A child goes missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff members should follow the local authority's procedures for dealing with children who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions. They should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse, exploitation and/or radicalisation also. Cardinal Newman will follow Warrington Local Authority's Child Missing Education protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

The school reserves the right, however, to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children's Social Care, Police Safe and Well-being referral,) if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents. Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the child is safe and well, including home visits by the LOCAL ATTENDANCE OFFICER. The school will contact relevant agencies after two days absence without confirmation from parents / carers if the child is subject to a 'Child in Need' plan or considered vulnerable in other ways.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, as outlined below;

- Pupils at risk of harm / neglect (school will follow standard Child Protection procedures for referrals to social care / police)
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families (school will inform local authority when a GRT student leaves the school without identifying a new destination school).
- Families of Armed Forces (school will contact MOD Children's Education Advisory Service for advice on making arrangements for continuity of education)
- Missing children / runaways (direct referral to Children's Services and Police)
- Children supervised in the Youth Justice system
- Children who cease to attend a school

When a pupil returns from a period of extended absence appropriate daily attendance checks

will be carried out and their attendance, behaviour, emotional and physical well-being will be monitored closely by the Attendance Officer and the safeguarding team in school. Parents / carers will be invited into school with the pupil to meet the DSP as part of the reintegration programme and relevant support will be offered to the pupil / family as necessary.

### **Reluctance to go to school:**

Sometimes students seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to the Attendance Officer and the Head of Year.

### **Home Education**

Under the DFE guidance on attendance (March 2013); 'Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school'. If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from the school the child will be known as 'Electively Home-Educated'. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from the school will be required to confirm this in writing to the Headteacher. The school will forward this letter to the Local Authority and the Safeguarding team at Warrington and the child will be removed from the Admission register at Cardinal Newman Catholic High School. The Local Authority will then determine whether or not to accept this new arrangement or challenge it. However, parents are unable to withdraw their child from school if they are subject to a 'School Attendance Order'.

Children with Special Educational Needs statements (Education, Health and Care Plans) can be home educated. Where the statements sets out special educational provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. The local authority must review the child's statement / EHC Plan annually.

### **Leave of Absence in term time**

Under the DFE 'Advice on School Attendance' parents can **no longer** expect schools to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday for up to 10 school days per year. The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'. The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. **From this perspective leave of absence in term time is no longer a parental right and will only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.** Under DFE guidelines the school may consider taking legal action against a parent/s who takes leave of absence without the Headteacher's permission. If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time we advise parents send a letter into school outlining the reasons for and dates of the leave of absence. A letter will be sent from school either authorising the absence or not.

If the student does not return within 14 days of the agreed return date the school has the right to remove the student from the school register without parental consent. **This would mean the student would lose their place at school.** It is also important for parents to note that the student may also be removed from the school register if the parent decides to remove the student from the country for an extended period of time (more than six weeks).

**It is important for parents / carers to note that the school will not authorise ANY leave of absence unless the school feels the circumstances are unavoidable.**

**Families leaving the country must notify the school and attend a meeting with the school's attendance officer to complete 'Child Leaving the Country Notification Form'. See Appendix 3.**

Additionally, as previously outlined in the policy, the school reserves the right to either contact the parents / carers directly or make an immediate referral to social care or the police if the school feels a student is potentially at risk being taken out of school during term time. This is particularly relevant to concerns the school may have about sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and radicalisation.

The school will seek advice from the local authority if a pupil fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school and local authority have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the pupil. This applies to leaves of absence that are both authorised and unauthorised by the school. As a result the school may remove the pupil from roll under such circumstances. However we will keep the pupil on roll if the family remain in contact with the school even though the pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Students with attendance below 90% may fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised.

According to the DFE guidance (March 2013); 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority'. In addition 'Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)'

When a student's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) he/she will meet with the school's Attendance Officer and home will be contacted.

The school will follow the guidelines if a student has **20 sessions (10 days)** or more unauthorised absence in a **12 month period**. In this eventuality both parents, even if one of the parents does not live with the student, will be invited into school to attend a 'School Attendance Review Meeting'. The student's attendance will be monitored for a four week period. If the student attends school every day during this period parents they will meet with the attendance officer who will comment on the improvement. If the student is absent from school during this monitoring period parents will be expected to provide **medical evidence** (ie – medical appointment cards, copy of prescription, letters concerning hospital appointments, letters from professional organisations (CAMHS), print screen of medical notes, doctor's medical certificate). If there continues to be no improvement in attendance and absences remain unauthorised, the school and the LA will complete the prosecution paperwork and begin to undertake the necessary legal action against the parents. This will initially result in a **Fast Track Prosecution**. Failure to pay the Fine will result in further legal

action. This could lead to an **Aggravated Fast Track Prosecution** which will result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months in prison.

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an **Education Supervision Order** (ESO) and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly. The Local Authority may use an ESO as an interim measure before moving directly to prosecution.

Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a **Parenting Order**. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent/s but previous parental failure to engage with the school and local authority can be cited. If a Penalty Notice Fine is issued by the court, the school will be required to continue to monitor the student's attendance and begin the process again if the student has a further 20 sessions (10 days) unauthorised absence from the date the fine was issued by the court. This may result in further legal action taken against the parent if the student continues to have periods of unauthorised absence from school.

### **Snow Closure**

As a school we will only close in the event of snow if we feel it to be necessary to ensure the safety of all members of our school community. If it is necessary to close the school, we will use the following methods to inform you; Text Message Announcement on the school website – [www.cardinal-newman.org.uk](http://www.cardinal-newman.org.uk)

Announcements made on the following radio stations

- *Key 103 (FM 103)*
- *BBC Radio Manchester (FM 95.1 )*
- *Radio City (FM 96.7)*
- *Rock FM (FM 97.4)*
- *Wire FM (FM 107.7)*

In the event of a school closure, work for each subject is available on the school website.

### **Punctuality**

The 1996 Education Act requires that every student should attend school and be on time. It is better to be late than not to be in school at all, **BUT** when students arrive late it makes it difficult for everyone. The teacher has to stop and wait for the latecomer to settle down, the rest of the class is disrupted and the latecomer misses the, often vital, first part of the lesson and will receive a consequence.

Students who arrive after registration **must** sign in at the General Office. Failure to sign in can lead to consequences being issued.

If you are aware your child will be arriving late, please send him/her with a note explaining the circumstances or contact the school by telephone, i.e. - unplanned appointment at the doctors.

Young people form habits very readily and the habit of regular and punctual attendance at school will stand them in good stead. It will be entered in their File and will certainly impress

college lecturers and prospective employers. When students are applying for jobs / further education or other placements their attendance and punctuality will form part of the reference. This will have a direct impact upon their success.

Students will receive a one hour detention on a Friday evening if they are late on two or more occasions in one week. Failure to attend this detention, if the student is in school, will result in a one and a half hours detention the following Monday.

### **Rewards/Incentive points**

- The student can earn 50 points each half term if their attendance is 100%  
If your attendance is 99-97%  
96-95% = 30 points  
94% = 20 points
- The student can earn 50 points each half term if their punctuality is 100%  
If their punctuality is 99-97% = 40 points  
96-95% punctuality = 30 points  
94% punctuality = 20 points
- Each term all students with a 97% and above will be entered into a raffle. There will be a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for each year group.
- Students must have at least 90%, no more than 20 lates and 500 points to be invited to the Christmas reward trip.
- Students must have 90%, no more than 30 lates and 1,500 points to be invited to the end of year trip.

### **Improving attendance – WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:**

1. Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously this is not always possible but in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that he/she can complete most of her timetable before leaving.
2. Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school. Try to make sure he/ she has an alarm clock that is reliable. Make sure that she has a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Bags, books and other equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
3. Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
4. Check with the school's Attendance Officer if you have any concerns about whether your child is present in school. Our Attendance Officer is Miss Charlton.
5. Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances please contact the Headteacher and decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
6. Encourage your child to come to school even if she is feeling slightly unwell. Many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and the school will contact you if it becomes necessary.

7. Talk positively about going to school – “What was good about school today?” “Did anything funny happen?”
8. Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact your child’s Head of Year before the concerns escalate.

### **Improving attendance – WHAT SCHOOL DOES:**

1. Mark the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
2. Informs any parents / carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
3. Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.
4. Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that **only** the school can authorise absence.
5. Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and / or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
6. Provides access to staff with whom attendance related issues can be discussed.
7. Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the student / family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
8. Provides re – integration support for students returning from absence.
9. Encourage students to arrive on time for school.
10. Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
11. Works with relevant external agencies if a students’ attendance becomes a concern, ie – Social Care, CAMHS, Pupil Support Service, Police, YOT.
12. The school’s Attendance Officer meets regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to discuss students who are giving cause for concern.

### **Key People**

Headteacher – Mrs J Warburton  
Deputy Headteacher – Miss Burras  
Deputy Headteacher Mrs Barker (yrs 7 and 11)  
Assistant Headteacher Mrs McLoughlin (yrs 9 and 10)  
Assistant Headteacher Mrs Burn (yr 8)  
Assistant Headteacher Mrs Hulse  
SENCO – Mrs Sewell  
Attendance Officer - Miss Charlton  
Education Welfare Officer – Mr Cartwright

**The school has a legal responsibility to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. Our staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Your continued support in this matter is essential. Please work with us.**

## Appendix 1

<h1>Excellent</h1>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is above 98%</b>          As well as being an excellent attender your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for his/her ability and have real opportunity in further education or the world of work.</p>
<h1>Good</h1>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is 96-97%</b></p>
<h1>Satisfactory</h1>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is 95%.</b></p>
<h1>Unsatisfactory</h1>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is 94-90%. They are below the national government threshold of 95%</b>          Your child will miss up to <b>18 days</b> each school year and this will make it difficult for him/her to achieve her best</p>
<h1>Concern</h1>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is between 85-90%.</b>          Parents / Carers may face a fixed penalty fine as your child's attendance is below 90% and they are 'Persistent Absentees'  <b>Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for him/her to keep in touch with lessons or work.</b></p>
<h1>Serious Concern</h1>	<p><b>Your child's attendance is below 85%</b>  <b>TAKE ACTION NOW</b> as you will face a fixed penalty fine or further legal prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve!  <b>Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be almost impossible for him/her to keep in touch with lessons or work!</b></p>

Appendix 2



To whom it may concern

Cardinal Newman Catholic High School is committed to working with pupils and parents/carers to improve pupil attendance and achievement by reducing absence. Please confirm by signature or practice stamp that (insert pupil name) \_\_\_\_\_ has attended the surgery or practice today.

Is this condition likely to impact further on his/her attendance? YES/NO

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ --

Practice name /stamp:

Please return this form to the school office.

**Child Leaving the Country Notification Form**

Your Details	Name:		Date:
	School/Organisation:	Contact number:	
Child & Family Details	Forename(s):		Surname:
	DoB:	Gender:	
	Date last seen in education:	Date last seen:	
	Parent(s) names and all contact details (including addresses, telephone and email):		
New Country	Information about where the child is going, reason why and date of move		

Please list details of any known siblings:

First Name	Last Name	DOB	Male/Female	Date child last attended school

Is the child (please tick):

Looked after	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Temp Accomodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugee / Asylum Seeker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide further information about either child(ren) or family, including whether you have any concerns about the family or the reason for leaving the country:

Form to be forwarded to David Sampson, Attendance Officer and CME Lead, Attendance Team, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington WA1 2NH or electronically to [cme.referrals@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:cme.referrals@warrington.gov.uk)

