ATTENDANCE POLICY

1.	INTRODUCTION

The law requires the full attendance of each student according to their individual program arrangements. We promote punctuality and discourage lateness. We will coordinate our approach to non-attendance with the Education Welfare Service and other outside agencies as necessary. The Governors and staff at St Gabriel's CE will work together with students and parents/carers to support student attendance.

2.	PRINCIPLES

- Good attendance is paramount to achieving full potential.
- Pupils are at risk when not attending.
- Regular attendance demonstrates positive commitment to our pupils and the role parents/carers play in their children achieving their full potential.
- At St Gabriel's CE the school and parents/carers are in partnership to ensure the best possible education for our pupils.
- Support must be given to achieve and sustain regular attendance and punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum and caring learning environment will also promote good attendance.

3.	AIMS

We aim to promote good attendance by offering a positive experience of education. We aim to treat all our pupils as individuals and will try to remove any barriers that do not encourage good attendance.

- To collect information on attendance for all pupils and seek to improve it.
- To encourage all staff to promote good attendance via positive relationships, including set procedures for attendance information.
- To provide support for parents/carers and pupils who experience attendance and punctuality difficulties.
- To promote good communication between St Gabriel's CE, parents/carers, pupils and support agencies.
- To develop a curriculum that allows all pupils to achieve their full potential.
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school, reduce both authorised and unauthorised absence and to reduce lateness.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Carers Responsibilities

Under the Education Act 1996, it is the responsibility of Parents and Carers to ensure the full attendance and the punctuality of the child or young person for whom they are responsible. Failure to do so is an offence and can lead to prosecution. (See additional information sheet – School Attendance & the Law).
St Gabriel's CE Primary will use Individual Attendance Support Plans (IASPs) and Parent/Carer agreements to monitor school attendance for those students who need additional support for maintaining good school attendance. St Gabriel's CE Primary aims to support parents/carers in meeting their statutory responsibilities.

What is expected of parents?

- To keep their child's absence to a minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- To work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important times such as assessment weeks
- To support their child and recognise successes and achievements
- To keep school updated should contact numbers or address details change

St Gabriel's CE Primary

It is the responsibility of St Gabriel's CE to actively pursue the full attendance of each student:

What is expected of school?

- Ensuring all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and procedures in place to support attendance and use them appropriately.
- Ensuring that the staff rigorously record attendance, absence & punctuality at St Gabriel's CE Primary.
- Ensuring St Gabriel's CE Primary offers support to parents/carers and students to encourage and monitor achievement of attendance targets.
- Ensuring that the Head Teacher oversees their 'action plan for improving attendance' at St. Gabriel's CE and rigorously applies the attendance policy.

Education Welfare Service

It is the responsibility of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the Education Welfare Service to give a statutory service to St Gabriel's CE Primary. This will include:

What is expected of EWS?

- Participate in the monitoring of attendance patterns.
- Offer advice and consultation regarding school attendance/absence
- Consider and pursue legal action for non-school attendance

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ST GABRIEL'S CE named Education Welfare Officer is
Yvonne O'Hara and can be contacted on
01706 925115

5. MONITORING & EVALUATION

All Staff at St Gabriel's CE Primary are responsible for the monitoring & evaluating of school attendance.

Monitoring and evaluation of **children's school attendance is the responsibility of all staff,** however there are key people with responsibility:

Head Teacher	Karen Race
Deputy Head Teacher	Linzy Brown
Attendance Officers	Colette Flitcroft
Education Welfare Officer	Yvonne O'Hara
Governors of St. Gabriel's CE	All Governors

Regular monitoring will take place by Senior Leadership Team and the '**Improving Attendance Action Plan'**.
Governors will also monitor attendance through the termly Headteacher report.

- Registers are kept electronically at St Gabriel's CE Primary and are monitored daily by the Attendance Officers.
- Details of all absences and lateness are recorded. Senior Staff and Attendance Officers will monitor the main entrance every morning and record the number of pupils who are arriving after school starts at 9.00am (lates section).
- The Senior Staff and Attendance Officers monitor the pupils who are absent on a daily basis and use a range of strategies to reduce individual pupil attendance.
- A log is kept of all text and telephone correspondence between parents and school.
- We will use a variety of letters to ensure that we keep parents/carers informed of any concerns.
- We promote positive school attendance.

We provide a caring environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone

Persistent Absentees (PA)

St Gabriel's CE Primary and the Education Welfare Service will monitor all students who are deemed Persistent Absentees (government guidelines are currently 90% or below) and we will challenge all absence including authorised absences e.g. illness, medicals etc.

St Gabriel's CE Primary will be using action plans to improve school attendance. If the child you have care for is a persistent absentee, you may be asked to sign a parent agreement in an Individual Attendance Support Plan (IASP).

St Gabriel's CE Primary will use **Attendance Panels** for identified groups of pupils and may include Senior Management, EWO, Attendance Officer, The Parish Vicar, School Health Practitioner (SHP) and other agencies/staff deemed necessary to improve school attendance. If you are invited to an Attendance panel, please ensure you support the school by attending so that we can work together to resolve concerns.

6. ACTIONS

St Gabriel's CE Primary will use a range of resources, processes, data and reports for monitoring and evaluating the school attendance of all our students. St Gabriel's CE staff will follow key actions so that all staff are involved in school attendance.

St Gabriel's CE Primary will ensure that students access appropriate educational provision. All staff understand their responsibility to the 'Improving School Attendance Action Plan'.
The Attendance Policy will become the foundation for a more individual, specific action plan that reflects the needs of the School and the individual pupil, incorporating the 'Children's Act 1989' the 'Education Act 1996' and the ethos of St Gabriel's Primary.

A very clear **St Gabriel's CE Primary Improving School Attendance Action Plan** will be implemented to build on the new infrastructure for future attendance systems.

This new **Improving School Attendance Action Plan** will involve all staff supporting pupil attendance and the work of the Education Welfare Service in creating a multi-disciplined approach to best support St Gabriel's CE to improve school attendance.

Understanding some of the Improving Attendance Actions at St Gabriel's CE Primary

Attendance Targets – Full time education for every student at St Gabriel's CE Primary

We promote good school attendance.

St Gabriel's CE Primary promotes good attendance and will recommend pupils for rewards (e.g. certificates, for good attendance and for meeting attendance targets). Improvement in pupil attendance as well as regular and good attendance will also be rewarded.

- Daily rewards leading to end of half term prize draw
- End of term and year rewards for 100% attendance.
- Attendances and absences are included in reports, which are also sent home.

Individual Attendance Support Plans (IASP)

What are they used for?

IASP are used in line with St Gabriel's CE Primary Attendance Policy and Action Plan for Improving School Attendance.

Main Objective:
To offer support to ensure that all students attend school regularly and access the support offered to him/her in order to improve school attendance and access the education provision provided.

- Good attendance is paramount to achieving a child's full potential.
- Regular attendance demonstrates positive commitment towards the pupils and parents/carers part to achieve children's full potential.
- St Gabriel's CE Primary and parents/carers are in partnership to ensure the best possible education for our pupils.
- An appropriate curriculum and caring learning environment will promote good attendance.

If the student has a Child Protection Plan, CAF, is vulnerable, has SEND, is LAC, has medical or school attendance concerns, then they may need an **Individual Attendance Support Plans (IASP)**.

The purpose of an IASP is to support the young person with improving/sustaining school attendance. This is a very individual support plan that requires needs assessing to identify barriers that stop a pupil accessing the educational provision offered. When need is identified only then can St Gabriel's CE Primary /EWS support the student.
The objective to an IASP must always be to aim for a full education for each student.

7. COMMUNICATION regarding absence.

Informing school, of absence & lateness.

Parents and Carers are asked to notify the school on the first day of absence/lateness either by note, telephone or personally. (Preferably by the close of register – see below)
St Gabriel's CE Primary – 0161 653 9587
If the student is having more than 1 days absence, then the parent/carer must inform the school every subsequent day unless told otherwise.

If a child is unable to attend school, make sure that the school is fully aware of the circumstances. However, please remember that schools are very limited in the type of absences that they can accept and that they are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil misses school for an unacceptable reason. **The Head Teacher reserves the right to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.**

St Gabriel's CE Primary uses a computerised registration system; the register is completed in the morning and afternoon. The school register is a legal document.

St Gabriel's CE Primary opens at **8:50am** and your children are welcomed in to settle before the register opens.

The school register will open at 9**.00am**. Your child is expected to be ready for lessons at this time. If you arrive after this time, you must report to the main office. They will record the time you arrive and the reason for the late arrival. Persistent lateness is not acceptable and an improvement strategy will be drawn up between school and parent.

Pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be marked down as Late (L)

The computerised registration system, recording pupils who are on time and late, will close at **9:25am**. Pupils who arrive after this time will receive a (U), late after registers close mark.
This equates to an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registers will close at 1:30pm for KS2 and 1:15pm for KS1 and foundation Stage. Pupils who arrive after this time will receive a (U), late after registers close mark.
This equates to an unauthorised absence.

Penalty Notices

St Gabriel's CE Primary is using penalty notices and if your child meets the criteria, this could result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

If no explanation is provided by parents for the child's absence/lateness then the child's absence is always considered to be unauthorised. It is the Head teacher's decision to authorise absences or not. In some cases a parent may have provided an explanation but the absence would still be unauthorised.

School has an information sheet for parents regarding penalty notices

Unauthorised absence

These are a few examples of unauthorised absence:

- Going to buy new uniform, new shoes etc.
- Parent feeling unwell and so not able to take the child to school- (*In this instance always phone school and we will see if we can do anything to help).*
- Going to collect family members from an airport
- Not realising that school had started again (return date after a holiday period)
- A sibling (brother or sister) had a medical appointment.
- Take the day off for your birthday (or a family member's birthday)
- Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time
Legal Information

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 does allow Head Teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose "special circumstances".

Amendments to the 2006 regulations do however remove references to family holiday and extended leave

Amendments to the 2006 regulations also removes references to the statutory threshold of ten school days.

In the past, some parents have misinterpreted this as a right to take 10 days out of school during term time and ***this is not the case.***

The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Holidays **will not** be authorised by the Head Teacher. Holidays taken will be recorded as an unauthorised holiday (Code G).

St Gabriel's CE Primary is using penalty notices and if your child meets the criteria, this could result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

Appointments during the school day

Parents/carers are asked to make routine medical appointments before or after school. However, it is understood that sometimes this is not possible.

- Parents/carers must provide school with a copy of all appointment cards / letters when taking a child out of school.
- We ask that you ensure your child returns to school after the appointment where necessary or attends school prior to the appointment.
- School will challenge parents where a child has missed a whole day of school due to a medical appointment.
- Please note that where appointments are made before the start of a school day and where children are not back in time for registration then a child will receive an authorised absence mark for that whole session (Code M).

It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves with the Improving School Attendance Action Plan & Attendance Policy

This attendance policy will be reviewed annually – next review September 2017
Person responsibility for reviewing the policy – Karen Race/Linzy Brown

Useful information relating to school attendance

School Attendance & the Law

Legal Implications - Failure to attend school regularly

Legal Proceedings can be taken against parents/carers for failure to ensure regular attendance at school for a child in their care.
Parents/carers can be summoned to appear before **Magistrates** who will also be able to force parents/carers to attend court.
Fines can be a maximum of **£2500** for each parent/carer and/or a possibility of **imprisonment for up to 3 months.** Magistrates can also consider other sentencing options such as Parenting Orders or Community Service.

(Education Act 1996 – Section 444 (1) to (7))
"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

Parenting Orders

(Crime & Disorder Act 1998)
Parenting Orders can be made in the **Family Court, Magistrates Court and all Criminal Courts (adult, youth and crown).** The court may consider the desirability of issuing a Parenting Order in addition to any fine imposed.
Parenting Orders are made when a person has been convicted of an offence under Section 443 (failure to comply with a School Attendance Order) or Section 444 (failure to ensure regular attendance at school) of the Education Act 1996 (Section 8 (1) (d)).

Education Supervision Orders

(Education Act 1996 – Section 447 and Children Act 1989 – Section 36)
The Children Act empowers the Local Education Authority to apply to the Family Courts for an Education Supervision Order where there are concerns about school attendance. The LA must consult with the Social Services Department. The child's welfare is the paramount consideration.
The supervisor, usually an Education Welfare Officer, has a duty to advise, assist, befriend and give directions to the supervised child and the parents in such a way as will ensure that the child is properly educated.
Education Supervision Orders can be sought in order to "advise, assist and befriend" children and young people to help them attend school. The Orders would be considered in the Family Court.

School Attendance Orders

(Education Act 1996 – Section 437 – 439)
"If it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they should serve a notice in writing on the parent, requiring him/her to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education … the Authority shall serve on the parent a School Attendance Order … requiring him/her to cause the child to become a registered pupil at a school named in the order. If a parent on whom a School Attendance Order is served fails to comply with the requirements of the Order, they are guilty of an offence, unless they prove that they are causing the child to receive a suitable education otherwise, than at school".

School Attendance Orders can be made specifying which school a child should attend.

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School
Advice to Parents/carers and Carers
The anti-Social behaviour Act 2003

- ***What is the Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003?***

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.
The powers came into force on the 27th February 2004.

- ***Why has it been introduced?***

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.
Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

- ***What is a Penalty Notice?***

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance.
Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

- ***What are the costs?***

From 1st September 2013, £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

- ***How are they issued?***

By post to your home.

- ***When are they used?***

Rochdale Local Authority considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs:
Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
Inappropriate parentally-condoned absence.
Excessive holidays in term time or excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission.
Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed).
In every case a pupil will have had in excess of 20 school sessions (i.e. 10 school days) lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or within any 12 week period before a Penalty Notice is considered.
The Authority never takes such action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement actions. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that the Authority will use the powers if this is the only way of securing a child's schooling.

- ***Is a Warning Given?*** Yes, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued, which will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 school days in which to effect an improvement. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences from school.

There is no limit to the number of times formal warning of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

- ***Is there an appeal process?***

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish.

- ***How do I pay?***

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice.
You need to be aware that payment in part or by installment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

- ***What happens if I do not pay?***

You have up to 42 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.
If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending upon circumstances.

Absence from school

Children are required to attend school for 190 days each year.
The Local Authority target for attendance in schools is at least 95%.

Attendance during one school year	Equals days Absent-	Which is Approximately weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	58 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	116 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	174 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	232 lessons
75%	48 days	10 weeks	290 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	333 lessons
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks	391 lessons

How does your child's attendance compare with this target?
Please remember, that children who miss a lot of school achieve less.

Parental responsibility

What is parental responsibility?

Parental responsibility (PR) is where an adult is responsible for the care and well-being of their child and can make important decisions about the following points for example:

- Food
- Clothing
- Education
- Home
- Medical treatment

Who has parental responsibility?

Married couples who have children together both automatically have parental responsibility.

Parental responsibility continues after divorce. Mothers automatically have parental responsibility. Where the parents are not married, the unmarried father has parental responsibility if:

- His name is registered on the birth certificate – this is the case for births registered after 1 December 2003. Fathers can re-register if their names have not been placed on the birth certificate before this date.
- He later marries the mother
- Both parents have signed an authorised parental responsibility agreement.
- He obtains a parental responsibility order from the court.
- He obtains a residence order from the court
- He becomes the child's guardian

Why would someone want parental responsibility?

If you are living permanently with a child, in a parental role, you may feel that you want the authority, stability and recognition. This is especially so if the other parent has no contact, or is abroad, unknown or dead.

Without parental responsibility you cannot make the decisions about a child's life, such as choice of school or religion, surname or guardian on your death.

If you are a step-parent, you cannot automatically have the child live with you on the death of a resident parent unless you have parental responsibility and so the other parent (providing that he or she has parental responsibility) will take the child.

If someone new gets parental responsibility, do others automatically lose it?

No, several people can have parental responsibility at the same time. Adoption and care proceedings are different. Parental responsibility can be lost where:

- In the case of parents their child is adopted.
- In the case of a person having acquired parental responsibility through a court order, that order later being revoked by the court.
- In the case of a local authority with care order and the court later revoking the care order.
- In the case of a guardian where the court appoints another guardian.

How long does it take and what does it cost?

You can sign a parental responsibility form immediately - by downloading the form.

If you have to go to court there is a duty to deal promptly with all matters concerning children and applications are treated as priority matters. The court fees are straightforward, but if you have to go to court you should obtain legal advice and discuss fees with your solicitor.