St Gabriel the Archangel
Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

Painsley Catholic College
Principal: Mrs R Waugh - BA (Hons), PGCE
Station Road, Cheadle, Staffordshire, ST10 1LH
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Friday, 8th May 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

As we embark on the written GCSE and A Level period for Year 11 and 13 (some Year 10 and 12), we give all the students our best wishes. They have worked incredibly hard and we have every confidence that they will achieve all they are capable of. We thank students from all years for their understanding and support as they move around the college in order to ensure Year 11 and 13 have the most appropriate conditions for their examinations.

At this important time of the academic year, I would like to remind you of the statutory and college expectations around school attendance.

In February 2024, the Department for Education published 'Working together to improve school attendance'. The changes to the regulations were significant, so it is important that all parents understand them so they can consider the consequences for themselves before taking leave in term time.

Two penalty notice limit in a three-year period - The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

- The first Penalty Notices for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.
- If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1,000.

National threshold for issuing penalty notices - Parents may have heard about the new national threshold for issuing penalty notices, which has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. However, all cases will be referred to the local authority and they retain the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. It is important for you to know that in the new regulations, we have no option but to inform the local authority of all unauthorised absence.

At Painsley Catholic College, every student has an attendance target of **97%** and we are all here to support you, as parents, in ensuring students remain above this attendance target. Indeed, we will be in regular contact with you regarding attendance, whether that is to congratulate students on maintaining above 97% or indeed to support students if they dip below 96%, 92% or 90% respectively.

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College attendance is considered important for several reasons, as it plays a crucial role in a student's educational and personal development. Here are some key reasons why college attendance is highly valued:

Social Development: Attending college provides students with the chance to socialise, build friendships and develop important social skills. Interacting with peers and teachers helps students learn how to communicate, co-operate and navigate various social situations, which are valuable life skills.

Health and Wellbeing: College attendance can also have a positive impact on a student's health and wellbeing. Colleges often provide access to healthcare services, nutritious meals and support systems for students who may be experiencing difficulties at home.

Academic Achievement: Regular attendance allows students to participate in classroom activities, engage with the curriculum and interact with teachers and peers. This consistent engagement is essential for personal and academic success. Students who attend college regularly are more likely to feel a part of college and keep up with their work, understand the material and perform better on tests and exams.

Knowledge Acquisition: College is where students acquire new knowledge, develop critical thinking skills and gain the foundational skills they need for future education and employment. Consistent attendance ensures that students have the opportunity to learn and build upon their knowledge base.

Routine and Discipline: College attendance establishes a daily routine and teaches students the discipline required in life. It helps them to develop time management skills, punctuality and a sense of responsibility, which are essential life skills that extend beyond the classroom.

Preparation for the Future: Regular college attendance sets a positive precedent for future responsibilities, such as employment or higher education. Employers and colleges often expect applicants to demonstrate a history of reliability and commitment, which consistent college attendance can reflect.

Legal Requirements: In England, there are legal requirements for college attendance up to the age of 16 and students are legally required to be in some form of education or training up to the age of 18. Parents or guardians can face legal consequences if their children do not attend college regularly, as education is considered a fundamental right for children.

Economic Impact: An educated workforce is essential for a country's economic development. By attending college regularly and completing their education, students are more likely to secure better job opportunities, earn higher incomes and contribute positively to their communities and societies.

Reducing Disparities: Ensuring that all students have equal access to education and attend college regularly can help reduce disparities and inequalities in society. It gives every child the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their background or circumstances.

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Civic Engagement: Education is vital for fostering civic engagement and active participation in society. Informed and educated citizens are more likely to engage in the democratic process, contribute to their communities and address societal challenges.

To support you in making a decision about whether to send your child to school if they are feeling unwell, please see: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Back to school week – Everything you need to know about school attendance - The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)

School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

In summary, college attendance is important because it forms the foundation for a student's educational, social and personal development and it has far-reaching implications for their future success and the wellbeing of society as a whole.

As a result of the importance of college attendance, we have a number of systems to support you as parents in ensuring your son/daughter attends college:

- All students and parents can monitor attendance via the Arbor app, which is live and personal to your son/daughter.
- All students have an Emmaus tutor and Pastoral Lead who track and monitor attendance on a daily basis and are the first point of contact for any concerns.
- Attendance is praised through weekly and half-termly achievement points, rewards acts of worship, attendance awards and celebrations.
- A dedicated attendance team, including our Educational Welfare Worker (Mrs Barlow) who monitor daily attendance and will text, call and visit students who are not in college.
- Dedicated medical support for any student who requires it, including care plans and reasonable adjustments supported by medical evidence.
- A dedicated safeguarding and SEND team, who are actively engaged with attendance and poised to support students as required.
- Support from the local authority teams.

I remind you that any unavoidable absence due to illness is reported as soon as possible. This can be done by contacting reception on 01538 4937777. If we do not have contact from you on the first day of absence, you will receive a text message to prompt you to contact school.

I would kindly ask that medical appointments are taken outside of college time whenever possible. Routine appointments should always occur outside of the college day. Unavoidable medical appointments must be accompanied by medical evidence and presented when collecting your son/daughter or accompanying them to college. **May I remind you that students are not allowed to leave the college site throughout the day and therefore must be collected for any necessary appointment.**

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Please be aware that punctuality is equally as important as attendance. Students must arrive at college at **8:35am** ready for an 8:40am start and be prompt to lessons throughout the day. Indeed, the college day has been reviewed to support students across a large college site. Students who arrive beyond 8:40am without a valid reason will receive a U code on the register. 10 U codes in a given period of time result in the local authority issuing parents with a fine.

Please be assured that we are here to work in partnership with you and if you have any concerns or indeed require support with attendance, please do not hesitate to contact your son/daughter's Emmaus tutor or Pastoral Lead, in the first instance, or Mrs Barlow (EWW).

The College Attendance Policy can be viewed on our website at www.painsley.co.uk.

At the start of this week, we heard the very sad news that William Simpson (Will) a dear Painsley student from 2018 - 2024, sadly passed away, peacefully, in his sleep. On Tuesday morning, as we gathered after the bank holiday, we remembered Will in our prayers and started to come to terms with our loss through sharing lots of wonderful memories he has left with us. It may be a coincidence, but a poignant one, that the 3rd May is also the birthday of St Carlos Acutis, the young saint of our time, who demonstrated his faith in a modern world and who was drawn to the father, at an early age, following ill health.

We thank God for the life of Will and the opportunity we had to be part of his incredible journey. We ask for God's comfort on all of us who mourn our loss and we pray that the faithful example of Will shine on us all in our vocation.

God Bless

R. A. Waugh

Mrs R Waugh