



# St Bede's

Catholic School  
& Sixth Form College

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Academic Year

2019- 2020

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Governing Body Approval : FGB	
Name:	Signature:
Date:	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2019
Review Date	Autumn term 2020 - 2021

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The **Gospels of Christ** contain the values upon which St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College is founded;

### SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College is to create an atmosphere of Catholic values, attitudes, practice and knowledge such that all children will have the opportunity for their faith to be nurtured. Thus they will be able to widen and deepen themselves as people in preparation for this life and for the life to come.

#### St Bede's Aims and Values

St Bede's aims to be a community inspired by **CHRIST** to serve others.

#### Common Good

To promote a spirit of **charity**, social **justice**, global **stewardship** and concern for others leading to a contribution to the common good.

#### Hope

To be an educational community built on foundations of **faith**, **hope** and **love**, which reflects Christ's message of **compassion**, **solidarity** and **forgiveness**.

#### Respect

To build a community of mutual **respect** working towards a common understanding of high standards of behaviour, good **manners** and individual accountability, as well as encouraging students to make **responsible** and positive **choices**.

#### Inspiration

To be a caring, supportive and inclusive community inspired by **Christ**, recognised by our love of God and of our **neighbour** whilst nurturing qualities of **resilience**, **determination**, **ambition**, **courage** and commitment, in order to live fulfilling and purposeful lives.

#### Service

To follow Christ's example of **serving** others, in a climate of **kindness**, **humility**, **friendship** and **cooperation**.

#### Talents

To encourage all members of the community to foster a love of life-long learning so that they can use their **talents** to the full, pursuing **excellence** in all things and in doing so, bring Christ to each other.

## **Principles**

Every child with his/her individual needs and gifts is a unique gift from God.

All members of staff, governors and teaching assistants accept responsibility for our pupil and are committed to meeting their pastoral, social and academic needs within a caring Catholic environment. This is an essential, integral part of the spiritual development of the whole school community.

All pupils are valued, respected and entitled to develop to his/her full potential, irrespective of need.

## **Aims:**

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. St. Bede's School expects pupils to attend regularly and punctually in order to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the 'Learning and Teaching' process and leads to educational and social disadvantage. It can also place children at risk and in some instances result in patterns of anti-social behaviour.

St. Bede's School sees the measuring of attendance rates as a key task and we believe that the goal of regular attendance should be pursued both in relation to individual pupils and the school as a whole. It is part of our responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which leads to non-attendance. In pursuing this aim we see the need to work closely with parents/guardians who are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school.

We believe that the greatest deterrent to truancy lies in the strength of our 'Home School Partnership'.

## **Objectives:**

- To maximise pupils' learning opportunities;
- To maintain and improve upon levels of attendance;
- To involve parents and others in the pursuit of improved attendance;
- To monitor, evaluate and review the policy annually and in the light of other external factors, e.g. legislation.

## **Statutory Duty**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/guardians to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education by regular attendance at school.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day – morning registration and afternoon registration.

## **The Headteacher's Responsibilities**

- The school keeps up to date records on the attendance of all students.
- All students are registered twice a day to comply with regulations, however for health and safety we register each lesson.
- Attendance percentages of individual students are used in academic reviews and written reports. Attendance statistics are reported to the Local Authority and the Governing Body.

## **The Responsibilities of the Parents/Carers**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive an education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs that they may have.

The school expects parents/carers to:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, in full school uniform and in a condition to learn.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Impress on their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- Take an active part in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and academic reviews.
- Notify the school if their child is absent from school. This should be done on the first day of absence and everyday thereafter until they return to school.
- Avoid arranging non-urgent medical/dental appointments during term time.
- Not taking holidays during term time.

## **Lesson Times**

- A register is taken in every lesson by the class teacher.
- The teacher will mark students as present, absent or late.
- Registers are taken at the start of the lessons.
- All lateness to lessons is challenged by subject teachers.
- Students are not usually permitted to leave lessons.
- Students leaving a lesson for any reason should be recorded on Classcharts as 'out of lesson' by the subject teacher.
- Students who need to leave the school during the day, for medical appointments or other reasons are required to submit parental explanation

or medical appointment card in advance. The student should then sign out at Student Support reception.

### **Lateness to School**

All students are required to be in school by 8.45 a.m. Students arriving between 8.45 a.m. and 8.55 am must report to their registration class, or assembly. Students who arrive after 8.55 am must report to Student Support where they will be marked as "Late" and issued with a break support session in Grounding the following school day. Students who arrive after 9.30am will be marked as "Late after register closed - U". The "Late" after register is closed mark is recorded as an unauthorised absence and will count towards students' overall percentage attendance. Parents of students who are persistently late will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Students who arrive late to school will be sanctioned in accordance with the school Behaviour Policy unless they have an authorised explanation. Students who arrive late to school on a delayed school bus service will not be recorded as late. This is not the case for students who travel by service bus or parental transport.

### **Absence from school**

**In line with government regulations, ([The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)) leave of absence (including holidays) cannot be authorised during term time. In exceptional circumstances a request may be granted by the Headteacher. Such requests must be made in writing well in advance of the absence. Absence taken without permission or if permission has been declined will be recorded as unauthorised and may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.**

### **Exceptional Circumstances:**

The legislation changes do not mean that an application for leave of absence cannot be granted by the Headteacher. The Headteacher has the discretion to grant leave if he/she believes that there are exceptional circumstances. The dictionary definition of exceptional is 'unusual' or 'rare.'

### **Authorising Absence and Approved Educational Activity**

The responsibility for authorising absences rests with the school. Written or verbal parental communication does not by itself constitute authorisation. The school may or may not accept the reason offered as valid.

Where a student has poor attendance, school may request to be provided with medical evidence in order to authorise an absence. Medical evidence will be scrutinised to ensure it is valid and appropriate before any absence is authorised.

The decision of the Headteacher is final.

## **First Day Absence Response**

Parents should inform the school by 8.30 a.m. if they know that their child will be absent on that day.

All attendance is monitored by the Attendance Manager. Parents of students where no parental contact has been made will be sent a text message or email asking them to reply whether they are aware of the child's absence or not and to explain the reasons for their child's absence. Absence without explanation is recorded as unauthorised.

## **Leaving school during the day**

Students are expected to stay in school for the duration of the day unless they are authorised, by the Headteacher, to go home for lunch each day.

If students need to leave school during the day (for any reason) they should bring in a note from their parents and sign out at Student Support Reception. If a student fails to bring a note in to school they will only be allowed to leave school if their parents inform the school by telephone and collect the student directly from Main Reception.

## **Role of School Officers**

The Student Support Team will meet regularly to:

- Identify students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Agree on focused, time-limited action which needs to be taken by the school.
- Feedback and exchange information in relation to work undertaken.
- Identify areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters.
- Agree personalised strategies for improving attendance.

## **The Use of Legal Action**

If a student fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and the school has exhausted strategies to secure that student's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action.

A complaint may be made against the parents, in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Children Act 1996), or an educational supervision order relating to the student under Section 36 of the Education Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances are taken into account when considering legal action.

## **Fixed Penalty Notice**

Parents who fail to respond to requests by the school to send their children to school or who take unauthorised leave of absence during term time or whose child arrives persistently late, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the Local Education Authority.

The notices will be issued at the discretion of the Headteacher. The fines will apply to cases where the parent/guardian is able but unwilling to ensure the attendance of the student.

## **Removal from School Roll**

A student of compulsory school age shall have his/her name deleted from the school admissions register when:

- The student is registered with us in accordance with the requirements of a School Attendance Order and another school is substituted by the LEA or if the order is revoked.
- The student is registered at another school.
- The school receives written notification from the parents that the child is receiving education somewhere else. The school's staff seek to establish the student's new address and place of education. The appropriate form is then passed to the Attendance Improvement Team.
- The student has been absent for more than 4 weeks. The school has failed to locate him/her after reasonable enquiry. We would send the appropriate form to the Attendance Improvement Team to enable them to try to trace the student.
- The student will cease to be of secondary school age before the school next meets and intends to cease to attend. (All registered students are required to remain at school until the leaving date). 'At school' includes for these purposes approved educational activities undertaken off site, including work experience.
- The student has had a permanent exclusion which has been upheld.
- The student has transferred to another school via a successful managed move or official interschool transfer.
- The student attends a special school and the LEA gives consent for his/her name to be removed.
- The student is absent from school for over 4 weeks because of detention in secure accommodation final court order or order of recall.

## **Promoting Attendance**

- The school celebrates and rewards good attendance.
- Students are expected to dress in accordance with the school uniform standards, take pride in themselves and their appearance.
- The school curriculum is continually reviewed to ensure that it is broad based, varied, challenging, differentiated and relevant to the needs of our students.
- The school will communicate with parents of students with poor attendance. These letters will escalate in their seriousness.
- The school has commissioned the service of an experienced Attendance Officer who, under the direction of Mrs G Kilburn, will promote attendance by making welfare house calls and enhance safeguarding and attendance strategies by following up on areas of concern.
- The school has an Anti-bullying Policy designed to prevent behaviour which hinders attendance. Students are regularly informed that bullying and aggressive behaviour is totally unacceptable. We have a climate in which bullying is reported immediately and dealt with.

Policy revised  
November 2019