



St Bede's

Catholic School
& Sixth Form College



Attendance Policy

Document History Log:

Author of document:	Mrs J Bradley	Job role:	Assistant Headteacher
Date document created:	Sept 2022	Approval by Governing Body:	

Annual Review History:

Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
First document review			
2 nd Review			
3 rd Review			
4 th Review			

Revisions Log:

Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories

Attendance key contact List

Academic Year	Head Teacher	Assistant Head
2022 – 23	Mr H Windle	Mrs J Bradley
Attendance Manager	Welfare Manager	Welfare Manager
Mrs K Taylor	Mrs S Diston	Mrs B Meggeson

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched



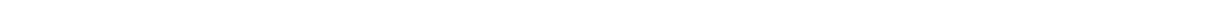
LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

We expect every child to be at school on time every day, unless there is a genuine reason. Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils.

At St Bede's all pupils are valued, respected and entitled to develop to their full potential, irrespective of need. We seek to ensure that every child receives an education which maximises opportunities to realise true potential. We will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

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.

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.

The Responsibilities of the school

- Promote the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality.
- Keep up to date records on the attendance of all students.
- Report school attendance data to the Local Authority and Department for Education as required.
- Monitor and record the attendance and punctuality of each student each lesson.

- Intervene when student attendance is low.
- Reward excellent attendance, 'excellent' is defined as being above 98%. This may be a lower percentage for pupils with special circumstances.
- Support families in raising their child's attendance and deal sympathetically with any issues a student may have which is causing attendance to decline.
- Talk to each returning student about the reason for their absence and ensure that they are given the means and encouragement to catch up on class work and homework that they have missed.
- Monitor punctuality: persistent lateness will result in an after-school detention.
- Text or telephone parent/carer informing them of their child's absence if no call or message has been received and their child is absent.

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.
- Actively ensure that their child attends school every day, unless there is a valid reason why this is not possible.
- Ensure that their child 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.
- Take an active part in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings.
- Notify the school if their child is absent by 9:00am and provide a full explanation for the absence. This should be done on the first day of absence and everyday thereafter until they return to school. Under the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence.
- Co-operate with the school if their child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Inform Student Support of any problems which might be affecting your child's attendance.
- Avoid arranging non-urgent medical/dental appointments during school time.
- Parents/carers are not expected to take family holidays during term time. St Bede's school will NOT authorise holidays taken during term time, unless agreed in advance by the Head Teacher under the 'exceptional circumstance' criteria. Any leave of absence that has been declined will be recorded as unauthorised. These cases will be referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.
- If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances. Absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations, and only in the case of exceptional circumstances during internal assessments.

The Responsibilities of the Student

- To aim to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality and to actively work towards this target by arriving to school every day and attending registration and lessons on time.
- Take pride in their school attendance and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- To provide a note from a parent/carer requesting permission to attend a medical/ hospital appointment - to present the note to Student Support Reception to be signed out.
- Take responsibility for catching up on schoolwork, missed due to absence, including homework.

The Responsibilities of the Student Support Attendance Team

- Ensure any messages received into school, telephone calls, e-mails or texts are individually logged and noted using the schools' electronic registration system – SIMS.
- Ensure the appropriate legal codes are entered onto each student's school record e.g. ill, medical appointments, educational visits etc.
- Identify individual students with good attendance records or improved attendance.
- Certificates and special rewards for the end of each term and the end of year presentations.
- Liaise with and support parents/carers to improve their children's attendance and punctuality.
- Engage families into the Early Help process or other relevant support agencies where appropriate.
- Liaise, if necessary, with any agencies to help address the needs of the child and/or family to facilitate improved attendance and punctuality. This may include Parenting Contracts or Education Supervision Order.
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of identified cohorts of children, giving timely and regular reports to Year Leaders and Senior Leadership Team.
- Keep student case notes and information enabling the Team to use the school's policy and to progress any cases through the school non-attendance procedures.
- Telephone or Text parent/carer informing them of their child's absence if no call or message has been received.
- The school has commissioned the service of an experienced Attendance Officer who, will promote attendance by making welfare house calls and enhance safeguarding and attendance strategies by following up on areas of concern.

Promoting Attendance

- The school celebrates and rewards good attendance.
- Positive Acknowledgements will be awarded half termly by form tutors for those students with excellent attendance.
- Attendance is discussed with individual students in form time, positive attendance is shared by tutors during morning registration.
- Each term Attendance Certificate printed off for students
- 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 has commissioned the service of an experienced Attendance Officer who, under the direction of Mrs J Bradley, will promote attendance by making welfare house calls and enhance safeguarding and attendance strategies by following up on areas of concern.

Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Communication

St Bede's requests that all parents remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, we can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

We will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

St Bede's will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to use the parent gateway or telephone Student Support, giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home, then school will text or telephone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment, they need to.

If the school receives no reason for any absence, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Punctuality

Registration time is at **8:45am** at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class.

Students who arrive after 9.15am 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 (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

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.

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 collects the student directly from Main Reception.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Attendance Procedures

Stage 1: EXPECT - Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Stage 2: MONITOR - Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. A letter is sent home to parents/ carers. Tutor may talk to each returning student about the reason

for their absence and ensure that they are given the means and encouragement to catch up on class work and homework that they have missed.

Stage 3: LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND - When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them. A further letter with a request for a meeting with parents/carers will be made. A home visit may be made by the School Attendance, School/Home Liaison Team.

Stage 4: FACILITATE SUPPORT - A further letter with a request for a meeting with parents/carers will be made. A home visit may be made by the School Attendance, School/Home Liaison Team. Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Stage 5: FORMALISE SUPPORT - Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order. A period of monitoring and a significant improvement is expected at this stage.

Stage 6: ENFORCE - Persistent absentees will be referred to the Local Authority for their statutory action. The Local Authority may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. If attendance remains below the required level, following the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice, the Local Authority may then issue legal notices and proceed to court. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The Use of Legal Action

If a student fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and support is not working or being engaged with, attendance may be enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution to respect the child's right to an education.

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

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.