



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School commits itself to:-

- Providing a Catholic Education, which promotes the overall development of all members of the school community, enabling them to achieve their full potential
- Recognising and respecting the unique worth of each individual
- Working in partnership with parents, parish and the wider community

Our school is committed to providing a quality education for all pupils. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the education in our school through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly.

AIMS

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the Curriculum entitlements.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their children attend school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that all parents will support the school by ensuring their child(ren) always attend lessons unless illness or some unforeseen problem arises. Appointments at hospitals, medical centres, clinics and dentists should be made outside school hours unless impossible to rearrange.

When there is a problem with attendance, parents are invited to a meeting to discuss the problem before an external referral is made for support. If there are child protection concerns then the Child Protection Procedures will be followed immediately.

We expect the following from pupils:

- That they attend school regularly with the help of their parents.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school, via school absence line or text, as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- To listen and investigate any issues notified to us.
- Recognition and reward for strong attendance.
- A strong quality education in a strong and supportive faith environment.

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS

Strong attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Registers are taken and accurately completed at the beginning of each session and within 10 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of attendance with individual school reports
- 100% attendance is celebrated at the end of each year with certificates and badges
- 100% attendance is celebrated after each full term with certificates
- The school uses 'SAM the dog' to encourage strong class attendance which is recognised each week in our merit assembly.
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of in school Key Stage transition and between KS2 and KS3 or when leaving one school for another. Relevant information will be shared with the destination school.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school, through learning mentor support and
- Reporting attendance to parents through school reports and as and when necessary.

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a pupil does not attend, the school will respond effectively in order to safeguard every child.

- If a text, note or telephone message is not received from parents, parents will be contacted from 9.30am on the first day of absence by telephone or text.
- Where there is no response, the additional contacts on our data system will be contacted to ascertain the reason for absence.
- In the event of no response, further contact will be attempted by telephone, text or home visit by school staff.
- Where non-attendance cannot be verified the case will be discussed with the SLT and advice sought from external services if deemed appropriate.

Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme
- A designated member of staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme, in close partnership with the parents or guardians.
- All staff will be made aware that the process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate.
- The success of the support programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Support programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Pupil illness (except where concerns are raised and medical advice sought does not align with this)
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. The Head teacher will decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents will be considered.

The law says that parents do not have a right to take their child out of school for holiday leave during term time. Any absence from school will have an impact on a child's education.

At St Benedict's school, we firmly believe that we should encourage and promote good attendance. We adhere to the Government legislation, regulations 2013, and will therefore not authorise any holidays in term time. There is no right time to have a holiday during term time, as your child is missing learning time. Only in exceptional circumstances will **leave** be granted.

The Headteacher sets out the requirements for permission to be granted for term time leave, which are outlined below.

- Any parents/carers wishing to apply for any term time leave of absence for their child should complete and return a form, available from the school office, to the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will consider the request for leave and notify parents in writing of whether the leave is authorised under special circumstances.
- The school reserve the right to ask for proof of specific leave circumstances.
- The school reserve the right to arrange a meeting between a senior member of staff and parents to discuss potential leave plans.

LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances and be part of a wider safeguarding issue. It may be necessary in exceptional cases to require support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Other Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- The school's Learning Mentor
- Attendance officer
- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

Approved Educational Activity

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category:

- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.

Lateness:

School actively discourages late arrival by speaking to parents who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. Children are late if they are not in attendance at the end of registration and will be marked accordingly at 9.30am. In the event of bad weather or significant road congestion due to motorway accidents this period can be extended.

Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open, they are marked present.

Ensuring pupil information is up to date

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively.

Pupils who are missing

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the school will adhere to the child missing in education protocol to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils.

This policy was agreed: November 2018

The policy will be reviewed November 2019, unless there are changes to the legislation.