



St Bede's Catholic High School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

'A pupil who is not there cannot learn'

Purpose

It is fundamental that regular school attendance and good punctuality is essential if children and young people are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them at school. Irregular attendance and punctuality not only places pupils outside of their statutory education but reduces their involvement with the caring and supportive community of school.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school every day and be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a **legal requirement** and also it is essential for pupils to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence of strong links between good GCSE results and good school attendance.

School Commitment

At St Bede's we consider a 'good' attendance record to be **96%** or above. It is recognised that the responsibility for promoting school attendance and punctuality is shared by the staff, parents/carers and pupils. Within school there is a professional responsibility for all staff to support attendance and punctuality and that it is not the responsibility of particular individuals or groups of staff. The whole school current attendance figure is measured against a Lancashire County Council target of 95% or higher. As a school we continue to strive for 100% and this is the message we share with pupils, parents/carers and staff. The principles of our Mission statement, LEA guidance and Department for Education [DfE] guidance will inform our policy and procedures.

The School will:-

Promote a culture across the school, at every opportunity, to identify the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Provide positive, consistent and supportive advice when communicating between home and school.

Procedures to Support this policy

- Each pupil is officially registered twice a day – once by their form tutor at the beginning of the day and then once immediately after lunchtime. In addition, each pupil is also registered at the start of every lesson. Lesson monitor is used to record and monitor pupil's attendance marks.
- Accurate records of attendance and punctuality are maintained and will be used for supporting intervention and for referring individuals to the appropriate level of support.

- We use our whole school reward system to recognise pupils with the highest attendance every term in conjunction with other available reward strategies; for example a post card home, recognition at the schools awards evening and celebration assemblies.
- We use an Attendance Ladder [Appendix 1] to monitor pupil's attendance.
- Our Attendance officer will identify attendance that dips below **95%** and letters will be sent home after consultation with the pastoral team.
- Pupils will receive a lunchtime detention when arriving for school after 9.00am without a valid reason that is reported to the school office by a parent/carer.
- Pupils will receive a lunchtime detention when they receive three late marks in any one week for failing to arrive at lessons on time. SIMS lesson monitor records this evidence.
- Upon return to school following a period of significant absence [medical, holiday or fixed term exclusion] there will be appropriate support in terms of reintegration. School may use the Pupil Support Base (PSB) to support this procedure.
- Following two or more periods of absence due to illness, or if absence is requested for any other reason, parents will be asked to provide medical evidence for any further absence. Failure to provide this evidence will result in future absences being unauthorised. Evidence would include; a doctors note, appointment card, copy of a prescription and / or medication box / bottle. For longer periods of absence school would require a written confirmation of the absence by a medical professional. For any absence exceeding three days we will ask parents to provide medical evidence on or after the third day.
- In the cases of persistent unauthorised absence, and if deemed appropriate, the school may contact the local authority to consider legal proceedings in the form of a 'Fixed Penalty Notice'.
- In some cases, School may consider prosecution under the Education Act 1996 to enforce attendance at school.

Protocols for:

Parent and Carers

- Ensure pupils attend school regularly and punctually.
- To contact school each day of absence, if no contact is received; the schools administration team will endeavour to make contact by telephone, Parentmail, email or text.
- Explain the reason for a pupil's absence with a written note which should include home address, be dated and signed by parents or carers. This note is checked and signed by the form tutor and then processed by the administration team.
- Absences that still remain unexplained after three weeks will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Provide a note or appointment card if their child needs to leave school for any reason. This note should include home address, date and the explicit reason for leaving school. This note is checked and signed by Form Tutor or Year Leader[YL] and is then processed by the administration team who record it on SIMS.
- Support school when intervention strategies are used to improve attendance and/or punctuality.
- Attend any planned meetings to help with attendance and/or punctuality issues.
- Be prepared to participate in Attendance or Punctuality Parenting contracts.
- For special consideration, complete a leave of absence request form [available from school reception] at least two weeks in advance. If a request is made after the absence then it will be marked as unauthorised on the pupil's registration certificate. A leave of absence request is always subject to investigation by the Headteacher.
- Be aware that if a pupil's attendance dips to 95% or below then a letter will be sent to the home address to inform parents of our concern. **If attendance drops to 90% or below at any time during the school year, then that pupil falls in to the category of a "Persistent Absentee"**

[PA]. Any pupil dropping to this level of absence will become a priority in terms of tracking and monitoring by the school. The school has a duty to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is in this category. All **PA** cases are reviewed by the Year Leader and SLT Strategies to improve attendance and punctuality will be considered.

Pupils

- Should attend regularly and arrive on time before 9.00am
- Arrive at lesson punctually throughout the school day
- If pupils arrive between 9.00am and 9.15am, they must go straight to their form room or if applicable, assembly or mass. They will be marked as late on SIMS by their form tutor and a sameday lunchtime detention will be administered unless parents/carers contact the school office before 12.00 noon to provide a valid reason for their child's lateness.
- If a pupil arrives after 9.15am they must report to reception and sign in late, stating the reason for their late arrival. They will be marked as late on SIMS and a same-day lunchtime detention will be administered unless parents/carers contact the school before 12noon to provide a valid reason for their child's lateness.
- If a pupil arrives after 9.30am they are considered as absent for the morning session. This must be explained by parental contact, otherwise an unauthorised absence is recorded on SIMS and an SLT after school detention is administered.
- On return from a period of absence, pupils must hand an explanatory note to their form tutor.
- Pupils must cooperate with members of staff if there is an issue linked to attendance and/or punctuality and ensure they work towards improving the issue.
- Must report to the main reception to sign out if leaving at any time during the school day. This procedure must be supported by an appointment card or a clearly written note from parents/carers. **Pupils are not allowed to leave school premises unsupervised during the school day unless prior arrangements have been made with parents/carers who have requested this in writing.**

Governors

- Agree targets for whole school attendance.
- In the event of a parental complaint; support the Attendance and Punctuality policy.
- If required, call an Attendance and Punctuality Governors meeting in conjunction with appropriate staff, parents and pupil. The need for this action will be reviewed on a half termly basis.
- Support the school with intervention strategies, attendance, Fixed Penalty Notices, Prosecution and/or Punctuality Parenting contracts.
- Receive reports on attendance and punctuality at each Pupil Welfare & Admissions committee meeting.
- Review the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedure on an annual basis.

Unauthorised Absence

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions to include a Penalty Notice being issued.

Unauthorised absence of ten or more school sessions in a half term may also lead to the authority issuing a Penalty Notice. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £120 per parent per child.

Further Information

Role of the Educational Welfare Service [EWS]

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to enforce regular attendance of registered pupils at school, which is carried out by the Lancashire EWS and Pupil Attendance Support Team [PAST] working with schools in West Lancashire.

The school provides the local authority with attendance data on a half termly and termly basis and is completed by the attendance officer in school.

- This allows the analysis of school level data to be documented with LCC.
- Provides information to allow schools to intervene to improve attendance and punctuality and review on a half termly basis.
- Ensures effective and regular liaison between the EWS, school leaders and other key agencies or organisations.

This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school, which are:

- Behaviour and Exclusion Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy and SEND Local Offer
- Health & Safety Policy
- Single Equalities Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- KCSIE

Adopted: June 2019

Next Review: May 2020 (Pupil Welfare Meeting)

Appendix 1: Attendance Ladder to support increase or decrease in attendance

Attendance	Action
100% Attendance Whole School Awareness	Congratulations Achievement Points School Rewards Learning Time Maximised
95% Attendance Pastoral Team Intervention Information provided to parents	Phone call/letter home to inform parents/carers and identify reason for dip, discussion with FT, YL, SLT
90% Attendance Attendance Review Meeting Improvement targets set	Parents/carers are contacted and invited into school for an initial attendance review meeting with YL, FT, SLT. Targets set.
89% Attendance Now at Persistent Absentee Levels Second meeting arranged	Parents/carers are contacted and invited to school for a further meeting. Further targets set and governor involvement raised with parents/carers
Less than 85% Attendance Serious cause for concern Governor Attendance Panel called	If Persistent Absence is due to a medial reason then seek consent from parent/carer to share information with School Nurse and NHS for support.
Lack of parental engagement or no improvement in attendance when dealing with a Persistently absent pupil.	This will result in referral to Local Authority for Legal proceedings to be considered, this could be in the form of a Parenting Order, Fixed Penalty Notice or Court proceedings.

Key

FPN = Fixed Penalty Notice
SLT= Senior Leadership Team
PA = Persistent Absence
YL = Year Leader
FT = Form Tutor
AO = Attendance Officer