



# St Bede's Catholic High School

## Attendance Policy

***"I am the vine, you are the branches.  
Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears  
fruit in plenty." John, 15:5***

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher, and Governing Body of the School. No amendments can be made without their express instruction and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

**Review date:** January 2024

**Next review date:** September 2024

**Reviewed by:** Miss E. Palmer

**Approved by Governors:** January 2024

## **THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT IN OUR CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

#### **Our Mission:**

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty.” John, 15:5

#### **Our Vision:**

To provide a transformative Catholic Education ensuring that our pupils are empowered to serve the common good, by living the values of Faith, Hope and Love

### **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

St Bede’s Catholic High School seeks to encourage excellent attendance from all students by offering an environment in which they feel welcomed, secure, and valued both for themselves and as part of the school community. School seeks to ensure that all students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for all to fulfil their true potential. St Bede’s attendance target is 96% and this is a target for all students that we are committed to.

The school will comply with the latest Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (2006) to improve the attendance of all students at school, and will:

- reduce the number of students who fall into the category of persistent absence (PA 90% or below)
- promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school and provide advice/support/guidance as appropriate to improve student’s attendance.
- continue to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- promote effective partnerships with other services and agencies whenever needed.
- recognise the needs of the individual student when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.
- identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of both regular and punctual attendance.
- 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.

The school procedures will include guidance on:

- registration
- what constitutes unauthorised absence
- consistent use of symbols for authorised absence
- leave granted under very exceptional circumstances
- systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual students.

- systems for dealing with absence
- systems for reintegrating students who have been absent
- systems for monitoring whole school attendance
- appropriate alternative curricular arrangements

### **Leave In Term Time**

Any leave in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parent/guardians must request permission for the leave **before** the absence. Requests cannot be agreed retrospectively. Leave must be requested a minimum of 5 days before the leave is desired.

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 such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/guardians to help their children and the school by not allowing their child to be absent in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time and all applications for leave must be made in advance by the parent of residence using the Google forms link on the school website. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the requests are considered to be exceptional and these requests will be authorised by the Headteacher.

In considering any request we will look at various factors such as:

- the timing of the request;
- when a student is just starting school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- students should not be absent, (where possible), (both) immediately before and during assessment periods.
- when a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- where a student's attendance rate is already below 96% or will fall on or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

St Bede's reserves the right to unauthorise any absence previously authorised where attendance falls below 96% furthermore, absence should not be requested for any student whose attendance is below 90%.

Whenever we are unable to authorise an absence and the request is for 5 days or more, we will notify the local authority who will in turn issue a formal written warning of the process of how taking an unauthorised period of absence can lead to a penalty notice. The Penalty Notice will only be pursued if you choose to ignore the decision made by school. It is important that parents understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless a circumstance surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

**This is a process that cannot be appealed**

The circumstances where penalty notices may be used include:

- unauthorised absence (including parentally condoned absence)
- truancy
- persistent late arrival at school
- unauthorised leave in term time
- delayed return from authorised leave

In every case a student must have had a minimum of 5 school days/10 sessions unauthorised absence in a term or 7 school days/14 sessions unauthorised absence over 2 consecutive terms before a penalty notice is considered.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the student does not return to school on the agreed date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed.

### **The school day**

Students are expected to be in school by 8.50am. The morning register closes at 9.20am and the afternoon register closes at 12:30pm. Students arriving after these times will receive a U mark (unauthorised absence), apart from students who have had a medical appointment where confirmation has been received by the Attendance Officer, these will be recorded as 'Late' and are counted as statistically present.

### **Attendance recording**

Attendance registers will be marked as laid out in the DfE [school attendance guidance](#).

### **Support to encourage good attendance**

St Bede's is willing to work with students and parents who need additional support in relation to normal, full time school attendance. We can accommodate phased returns after periods of illness, early and late starts and finishes or time out of school when pressure may be having an adverse impact on a student's mental or physical health and wellbeing. Everything that is discussed or considered will be tailored to the needs of the student although it should be clear that any alternative strategies should have a clear short-term end point being aimed for.

### **Partnership Working**

The school will work with support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school.

### **Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning**

The school will adopt systems for monitoring attendance at both individual student and whole school level. Letters will be sent advising of attendance and persistent absence and if necessary absences will be unauthorised which may lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The law requires parents or guardians to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

All parties have a role to play.

Parents/Guardians will:

- ensure their children attend school and are punctual.
- encourage and support their children to attend school and be punctual.
- avoid any absences in term time.
- if absences that still remain unexplained after one week will be recorded as unauthorised.
- provide notes of explanation, copies of medical appointment cards for all appointments and all medical evidence for any period of absence. For safeguarding reasons no child will be allowed to leave site without a parent/Carer.
- ensure sufficient prior notice is given requesting leave for exceptional circumstances.
- alert the school if they become aware of attendance problems.
- attend attendance meetings if concerns are identified.
- participate in Attendance Parenting Contracts, where appropriate.
- support the school in agreed interventions/action plans.
- expect contact if their child is absent and a message has not been received by 9.20am.
- expect frequent contact during periods of absence.
- be advised by the Senior Leaders who monitor attendance and have overall responsibility for ensuring that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance. They will take a lead in ensuring that attendance has a high profile within the school, and ensures that Year Leader and designated support staff have adequate time to discharge the day-to-day responsibilities.

Students will:

- attend school.
- recognise behaviour needed (for example early bedtimes) to allow regular and punctual attendance.
- arrive punctually for registration.
- follow the signing in procedures for late registration.
- 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.

School staff will:

- contribute to the promotion of raising the percentage attendance within school and reduction in the school's persistence absence figures.

Designated staff will:

- continue to promote the importance of full attendance and to share attendance data and attendance targets.

- continue to train FormTutors in the correct marking of attendance registers.
- continue to train all associate teachers in the correct marking of attendance registers.
- seek absence notes and/or medical evidence from students following a period of absence.
- check and amend absence codes.
- review and identify trends of absence.
- collate attendance data.
- analyse attendance data.
- contact the 'first point of contact' of absentees who have not notified school by 9.20am.
- monitor and record attendance of students who are educated elsewhere.
- implement re-integration programmes.
- contact parents regarding concerns by telephone and/or standard letter sent.
- involve the Senior Leadership Team if matters remain unresolved.
- arrange meetings with parents/guardians and draw up contracts for completion by all parties concerned.
- communicate and update all staff about attendance matters and school systems.
- ensure arrangements are in place in case of the absence of a Group Tutor.
- liaise with support agencies.
- submit attendance data to the CSA and the Systems Manager.

All staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for students.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum.
- provide sympathetic responses to any students' concerns.
- be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- ensure that attendance is seen as important for all students.
- assume responsibility to promote and monitor student attendance, despite the designated responsibilities.
- participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.

Governors will:

- adopt the policy and review it annually.
- consider attendance and persistent absence as regular agenda items.
- agree statutory targets for attendance for the school.

## **Procedures**

Registration:

- the school has a statutory duty to record student attendance twice a day and the registration periods are 8.50am – 9.15am and 12:30pm. An entry will be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll.

- At the end of the school term, where we have an early finish, afternoon registration will take place at 12:30pm. and students will be registered at this point. The day will still consist of 2 sessions, AM and PM.
- for late registration, students must sign in at the main office.
- for signing out, the students and parents must sign out at the main office.
- telephone messages from parents are recorded on the school system, by the administrative colleague who took the call.
- only the Attendance Officer under the direction of a member of the Senior Leadership Team is allowed to amend absence codes.
- attendance of dual registered and guest students is monitored.
- attendance of students taking part in school activities at registration time e.g. music tuition is monitored by the Attendance Officer.
- some absence codes, namely O and H, are to be used only with the approval of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Year Leader in the school will monitor students after any period of absence.

Decisions about no longer authorising absence will be made by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Strategies for Promoting/Improving Attendance**

School will:

- promote the need for excellent attendance with parents by regular reminders.
- following up absences with a sequence of letters and other procedures until the matter is resolved.
- reward good attendance, through the rewards system and pastoral assemblies.
- regularly monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups of students.
- engage in spot checks.
- emphasise the importance of good attendance at transition from Key Stage 2.
- implement the “first day contact” system.
- promote anti-bullying and provide support to any student in respect of bullying.
- consider curriculum delivery and differentiated learning as a possible impact on attendance.
- engage in the managed transfer process in collaboration with local schools.
- research the use of associate teachers as learning mentors, and use senior staff in the involvement of mentoring underachievers.
- offer Pastoral Support Programmes to support reintegration following exclusion, medical absence (extended) and non-attendance/truancy.
- use lesson registration for Health and Safety reasons and action by the Year Leader in respect of post-registration absence.
- agree individual student targets for attendance as appropriate.
- identify training for staff involved in the implementation of these strategies.

### **Parenting Contracts - Attendance**

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2002 makes provision for the use of Parenting Contracts where attendance is a cause for concern.

The school might ask parents to enter into a Parenting Contract when levels of lateness (after register is closed) and / or levels of absence become a cause for concern. This contract will identify the roles and responsibilities of parents/guardians, the school and the student for a mutually agreed period after which a review will be held.

There will be appropriate rewards/acknowledgement where contracts have proved successful and sanctions where contracts have been unsuccessful.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

The school will seek to adopt a range of strategies and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to promote excellent attendance and address poor attendance. Where such measures do not have the intended outcome, the Senior Leadership Team reserves the right to pursue legal proceedings, including the issuing of a fixed penalty notice, where a student has an unacceptable level of absence.

### **Removal from Roll**

Schools are legally required to advise the Local Authority about the details of all children admitted to and removed from the roll of their school. No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the school and the Attendance Service. St Bede's will be guided by the Local Authority in accordance with the criteria set out in Regulation 9 of the Education (Learner Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997 and 2001).

It is important that the school has clear arrangements for identifying such students.

The procedures include the following:

- Senior Leadership Team, the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and the Year Leader are responsible for identifying students who may have gone missing.
- Senior Leadership Team, the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and Year Leader are responsible for promptly referring such students.
- the member of staff in charge of admissions is responsible for completing the Common Transfer Form under the s2s system once a student has been traced elsewhere.
- advice will be sought before a student can be removed from roll when their whereabouts cannot be established.
- the Headteacher, after consultation with senior colleagues, is responsible for deciding whether a student can in fact be removed from roll.

### **School Based Systems for Dealing with Lateness**

- The system for late registration – students must sign in at the main office.
- The Form Teacher, the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and the Year Leader are responsible for working with students regarding punctuality.
- The Form Teacher, the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and the Year Leader are responsible for working with parents regarding punctuality.
- Support will be offered to students by the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care and the Year Leader.



- Lateness will be monitored daily, if a student is late then will have a same day lunchtime detention, failure to attend the detention will result in an upscale to an after-school detention. Further sanctions will be put in place for repeat offenders.
- Standard letters are available for the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care and their Year Leader to use to promote punctuality.
- Sanctions range from monitoring sheet, to report card, to student regularly reporting to the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care or the Year Leader.
- Parenting Contracts will be considered and implemented as necessary to intervene in the persistent lateness of their children.
- Penalty Notices will be considered and implemented to intervene in the persistent lateness of their children.
- Fixed Penalty Notices.

### **School Based Systems for Dealing with Absences**

- System of 'first day contact'.
- Letters of concern to parents/guardians.
- Inviting parents into school for discussion.
- Home visits where appropriate – where absence is being questioned
- Strategies for family support, including the use of Parenting Contracts where appropriate.
- Further school based action with more senior staff involved.
- Fixed Penalty Notices.

### **Monitoring, Analysis, Evaluation and Action Planning**

The school has identified the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care and the Year Leader as the people with specific responsibility for monitoring the whole school and year group attendance respectively, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's procedures:

- the office staff collect the data.
- data is collected and disseminated to relevant staff.
- feedback re analysis of attendance data will be provided to:
  - Governors – by the Headteacher.
  - Staff – by the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance or the Year Leader at a FormTutor Meeting.
  - Students – by the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance or the Year Leader during a the pastoral assembly as well as form teachers.

The analysis might identify specific issues for the various audiences:

- patterns of broken weeks by individual students.
- patterns of absence for individual students.
- misuse or inconsistent use of absence codes across the school.
- trends in reasons for absence extended medical leave granted leave in exceptional circumstances, exclusions, etc.
- trends in particular groups (ethnic groups, gender), forms or years.

