

Bishop Walsh Catholic School

Attendance Policy

June 2023

1. Philosophy

Bishop Walsh Catholic School understands that pupils attending school regularly with consistently good punctuality, leads to the very best outcomes for pupils. Excellent attendance enables pupils to fulfil their God given talents and be successful. Attendance will be encouraged through effective communication between pupils, parents/carers and the school. If attendance falls below expectation, Bishop Walsh Catholic School will use Birmingham City Council's FAST-track to attendance procedures to encourage improvements in attendance

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/9013/fast-track_guidance_-_april_2021

Bishop Walsh Catholic School recognises that there is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement at GCSE level. Poor attenders are much less likely to achieve five good passes at GCSE including English and maths. Research also demonstrates a strong correlation between high absenteeism in schools and poor pupil attainment when studying A level subjects.

Attendance %	Days/ lessons missed	Risk
97-100	5 days / 25 lessons	No concern
95-96.9	7.5 days/ 37.5 lessons	Concern
93-94.9	12.5 days/ 62.5 lessons	Risk of underachievement
90-92.9	15 days/ 75 lessons	Severe risk of underachievement
0-89.9	17.5 days/ 87.5 lessons	Extreme risk of underachievement

2. Legal Framework:

This policy has been written taking into account the following statements from the Education Act;

1. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 'If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence'.
2. Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996: 'If you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence.'

Keeping children safe in education (2023) suggests that Children Missing from Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

3. Aims of this policy:

- To safeguard the welfare of pupils
- To encourage parents/carers to take an active role in the attendance of their children.

school which encourages excellent attendance and punctuality, which prepares pupils for life after school.

- To develop effective systems of communication between home and school
- To recognise and reward excellent and consistent attendance.
- To utilise the 5 foundations of effective attendance practice framework to encourage excellent attendance across the school

4. 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework

In order to promote and encourage excellent attendance for all learners, Bishop Walsh Catholic School will adopt the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice Framework. The emphasis of this framework is on developing a school culture and climate of belonging to ensure all children can attend school and thrive.

The aims of the strategy are to

- Increase school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism
- Ensure attendance is well managed and the appropriate level of resources are allocated to attendance procedures
- To make informed use of attendance data to target interventions

The 5 Foundations of effective attendance practice are;

- To embed an ethos in which excellent attendance is expected, developed and nurtured
- To have clear systems and processes to improve attendance
- To have a team of attendance experts working with a shared vision and core purpose
- To implement targeted intervention for key groups/ demographics, where data shows attendance is concerning
- To ensure that rewards are utilised to encourage attendance and support a culture of belonging.

5. Absence Procedures

Reporting Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence. This should take place on the first day of the absence and on each subsequent day of absence. Parents should notify the school of a pupil's absence by **8.30am** (on 01213513215). If no notification has been received on the first day of absence, the school will contact parents via Parentmail to request that they contact the school to advise of the reason for the absence. The school requests that whenever possible all medical/dental appointments are made before 8.50am and after 3.20pm or during school holidays.

Punctuality

The school expects pupils to arrive to school and lessons on time. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning, but also that of others. Pupils must be on school site by **8.50am**. For Health and Safety reasons the school needs to know that a pupil is on site. Therefore, if they arrive after 9am they must sign in at the main office. If pupils arrive **after 8.50am** they will be given a late mark and a 20 minute after school

detention on the same day, regardless of the reason. Should this be missed the pupil will serve a Senior Leader 1-hour detention. If a pupil is late on multiple occasions in a half term they will receive a Senior Leader 1-hour detention. If persistent poor punctuality occurs, the FAST-track to attendance protocol will be followed as outlined for persistent absentees below.

Unauthorised absence

Where absence is occurring which has not been agreed by the school this will be marked as unauthorised. Definitions of unauthorised absence are:

- Truancy (including internal truancy)
- Parentally condoned absence without good reason
- Holidays in term time
- Arrival after the register has closed at 9.30am
- Absence without medical evidence following a SARM meeting.

Unauthorised absences will trigger internal monitoring of attendance and may result in the FAST-track attendance protocol being initiated.

Persistent absence

When a pupil's attendance becomes a concern, parents will be contacted to discuss concerns and support will be offered where appropriate. An Early Help referral will be offered and support put in place to encourage improvement in the pupils' attendance. If absence continues and thresholds are met, staged letters will be sent in line with the 5 foundations framework and parents will be invited for a SARM meeting. If this is not successful in improving attendance, referrals to the Education Legal Intervention Team will be made in accordance with the Fast Track to Attendance protocol.

Children missing from education

If a child is persistently absent without contact from parents/carers, school staff will make every effort to make contact with the child's family. If families do not respond to home visits/ phone calls and letters, a referral to the Children Missing from Education Team will be made.

Requesting authorised absences

Pupils will not be given authorisation to take authorised leave except in exceptional circumstances. It is very unlikely that requests for holidays or authorised leave will be authorised but if parents want the school to consider such a request they must mark an email to the attention of the Principal at attendance@bishopwalsh.net.

Monitoring attendance

Roles and responsibilities.

Form tutors will:

- Record attendance accurately
- Promote attendance within the tutor group

... de the Head of Year where attendance becomes a concern

- Utilise tutor report cards if pupils are persistently late.

Heads of Year will:

- Oversee and monitor all attendance matters within the year group
- Raise any concerns about individual pupils with the attendance officer and Vice Principal
- Contact parents for informal discussions where attendance becomes a concern
- Send letters at each threshold stage of the 5 foundations of effective attendance practice framework
- Reward pupils for excellent attendance
- Ensure a high profile with regards to attendance- refer to attendance in assemblies and pastoral sessions

Vice Principal and Senior Leadership team will:

- Discuss attendance at weekly pastoral meetings and in SLT meetings.
- Ensure that the 5 foundations of effective attendance practice framework are implemented across the school.
- Support the attendance officer with FAST-track protocols when necessary.

The attendance officer will:

- Ensure that registers are completed accurately
- Be responsible for recording all attendance data and reasons for student absence
- Use Parentmail to contact a parent/carer who has not informed the school of the non-attendance, requesting they contact the school.
- Send letters at each threshold stage of the 5 foundations of effective attendance practice framework.
- Complete Early Help referrals for families where appropriate when attendance becomes a concern
- Implement the FAST-track to attendance protocol when thresholds are met within the key stage.
- Track the attendance of pupils on managed moves or at Alternative Provision.

Designated safeguarding leads will:

- Ensure that pupils with poor attendance and/or poor punctuality are placed on the "Children with a vulnerability or safeguarding concern" list.

Parents/carers will:

- Encourage excellent attendance and punctuality with their children
- Inform the school if their son/daughter develops a medical condition that requires a reasonable adjustment from the school. If this occurs, a meeting may take place between school and home to produce a risk assessment for pupils to work in school or pupils will be set remote work using google classroom.

6. Rewarding excellent attendance

Pupils will be rewarded for excellent attendance throughout the academic year. This could include; letters home, achievement points, badges and invitations to the end of year reward's trip. Outstanding attendance across a child's school career may lead to an invitation to the awards evening. *Pupils with long term medical conditions that lead to unavoidable medical absence, will not be discriminated against when calculating 'excellent attendance'.*

7. Safeguarding

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies; safeguarding and child protection policy, the behaviour and rewards policy and the SEND and accessibility policy

8. Sixth Form

Please see the Sixth Form Attendance Policy Addendum available on the school website for all matters relating to Sixth Form attendance.

Appendix

1. Attendance codes will be utilised from the Department for Education found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf
2. 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework information can be found here;