



Bishop Walsh
Catholic School



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Date
Belinda Dunphy, Deputy Head Teacher	June 2018
Ratified by Curriculum & Ethos Committee	June 2018

Date of next Review.....June 2020

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour policy
- Equality policy
- Anti bullying policy
- Special Education Needs policy

Philosophy:

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school. Regular attendance is important if pupils are to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at Bishop Walsh School. Regular attendance is an important aspect of achievement, and prospective employers will look at attendance as part of their selection process.

Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can result in pupils placing themselves at risk. The school will address the issue of high levels of absenteeism and lateness, being sensitive to the individual circumstances relating to poor attendance, with the possibility of such pupils and their families receiving appropriate support.

Good attendance is an integral part of the school ethos, with pupils being rewarded for regular and improved attendance and good punctuality. Good attendance can be achieved through the forging of meaningful relationships between school, home and support agencies, and by offering a curriculum that stimulates every pupil.

Aim of this Policy

It is very important that every pupil attends school regularly. This Policy sets out how Bishop Walsh School will work with parents/carers and pupils to achieve this.

1. Statutory Obligations:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every pupil of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
 - (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

In terms of legal action, the Local Authority can only prosecute where there is unauthorised absence. In Birmingham this duty is delegated to the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT). The Birmingham Penalty Notice Code of Conduct states that there must be at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 12 month period for legal action to take place.

2. Regular Attendance:

Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Bishop Walsh Catholic School will monitor attendance as outlined in this policy

3. Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children/dependants or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any pupil may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they **miss 10%** or more schooling across the school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any pupil's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

5. Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher receiving vital information and news for the

day. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons which can be embarrassing for the pupil and can also encourage absence.

6. Roles and Responsibilities:

Everyone has a role to play in making this policy work effectively.

6.1 Parental Responsibility:

If a pupil is absent you must:

- Contact us by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of absence and **every day after if not already stated length of initial absence;**
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If a pupil is late you must:

- Provide an explanation for the lateness to the attendance officer

6.2 School Responsibility

House tutors will;

- Record attendance accurately,
- Promote the attendance ethic within the tutor group,
- Provide pastoral support with Head of Year,
- Place the pupil on report if he/she is persistently late.

Subject teachers will

- Strive to encourage pupils to succeed in the curriculum
- Act as role models by being punctual to lessons and duties
- Challenge pupils who are late to lesson or missing from lesson

The School Attendance Officer will:

- Text a parent/carer, who has not informed the school of the non-attendance, requesting them to contact the school.
- Contact by telephone some parents/carers, who do not contact the school. This will be at the discretion of the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP).**
- Provide termly reports for Heads of Year indicating those pupils with attendance of 90% or below which includes any reasons given for the absence.
- Agree with Heads of Year which pupils receive an “attendance concern” letter, this asks parents to contact Heads of Year to discuss the issues.
- Contact parents/carers by telephone when a pupil is persistently late.
- Carry out unannounced home visits if necessary with another member of staff.
- **Follow the FAST –track to attendance procedures, An early Help approach to legal intervention in cases of persistent absence**

Heads of Year will:

- Oversee and monitor all attendance matters within the year group

- Produce certificates for end of term assemblies for 100% attendance
- Ensure a high profile with regards to attendance – related issues in tutorial programme and assemblies
- Work jointly with the school attendance officer to identify pupils who have improved their attendance/punctuality and send a letter to parents/carers to praise the pupil.
- Work jointly with the school attendance officer to identify pupils who are persistently late/absent and parents/carers are contacted.
- Hold detentions for pupils who arrive late

Senior Management Team will:

- **The DLP will inform parents of their legal responsibilities regarding school attendance by using the whole school “School Attendance” letter at the start of the academic year by pupil post, email, or by placing it on the website or in the prospectus**
- Discuss at weekly Head of Year meetings any specific attendance/punctuality concerns
- Liaise with the attendance officer as appropriate
- **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure children with attendance concerns are placed on the “Children with a Safeguarding vulnerability list.”**
- **Complete the “Signs of Safety and Wellbeing” three houses form with the young person so the voice of the child is heard.**
- **Hold an informal meeting with parents to see what support is needed and whether an Early Help Assessment is required**
- **Call a formal “School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM) to agree an action plan and send the “formal Warning Notice if needed.**

7. Pupil Support

Pupils with unauthorised absence that falls below the rates of persistent absence of 90% will be monitored through the supportive **FAST - track programme**. The starting point for this is with a letter sent by the attendance officer to all parents in September.

Parents/carers and pupils are invited to a meeting to discuss the issues regarding the persistent absence to develop an agreed personal plan to improve attendance **which may lead to an Early Help Assessment** This may include a multi-agency support network if appropriate. The plan will have clear timeframes and review dates in place.

8. Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a pupil’s schooling as much as any other absence. We expect parents/carers to help us by not taking pupils away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a pupil’s education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school. A maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

9. Monitoring of Policy

This effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Weekly **Head of Key Stage** meetings with Heads of Year
- Termly reporting to **Curriculum and Ethos** Committee