

# **St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy**



## **Attendance Policy**

We commit ourselves to love, respect  
and serve one another as disciples of  
Jesus Christ

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## Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. At St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy high attendance is a school priority. We understand that students who are absent from school will miss important educational opportunities which impact upon their progress, achievement and outcomes. As an inclusive school, we regularly monitor and evaluate students' attendance and progress. We are keen to work with parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that all students can maintain high attendance records and reach their full potential. All staff should promote excellent attendance and punctuality. All adults that work in the Academy are expected to promote the importance of attendance by being positive role models.

## Aims

At St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we welcome all young people and support them to excel both academically and socially. It is our belief that students should feel respected, valued and loved in a supportive, kind, caring environment which allows them to feel safe and resilient enough to tackle daily hurdles they may encounter in life.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- To provide a welcoming and supportive environment in which all members of our school feel safe and valued, and consequently strive to succeed
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education which maximises their opportunities for learning and progress
- Acting early to address patterns of absence by working closely with parents and carers to address concerns
- To embed a fair and effective system of rewards and consequences which acknowledges students' efforts, attendance and punctuality
- To celebrate high attendance by Tutor Groups and Houses
- To meet all requirements of current legislation

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We will also have a range of strategies and support systems in place to deal with problems and students needs to be aware that adults will support them through any difficulties. Clear and consistent referral processes are in place to identify and address attendance issues.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **3. School procedures**

### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Attending alternative provision

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Unauthorised absence

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day and the morning registration occurs.

### **3.2 Unforeseen absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents should phone the school directly and inform the Academy of the reason for absence.

Absence due to illness may be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence. This will be a letter from a GP or medical practitioner stating a young person is unfit for school. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorized.

The Academy reserves the right to contact parents or home visit as and when necessary.

Please note: If an absence pattern emerges or concerns are raised regarding attendance, absences for illnesses may not be authorized.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. NHS services support schools and encourage students to attend lessons. Therefore, they will support appointments being made outside of the school day. Parents should contact the SLO for their child's House directly and provide evidence of appointments in advance of the appointment. Full day absences are not authorised unless in exceptional circumstances.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A stringent system operates to record lates. Students who are regularly late to school are awarded consequences consisting of detentions. Ongoing punctuality issues will result in meetings with parents and interventions to ensure students attend school at the designated time.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

Academy procedures will take place and may include contacting parents or home visits where required.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Student's attendance is reported in student's school reports. It is available for parents to view on Go4schools and all parents are issued with login details. When a student has a concerning attendance pattern, an attendance procedure is triggered. House Leaders will contact home via letter. If no improvement is witnessed, another letter is sent. Attendance plans are put in place to identify relevant support and interventions if there is not sufficient improvement. This should have a positive impact upon a student's attendance figures. If this fails to improve attendance, referrals will be made to the Education Inclusion Service. Early Help Assessments may be implemented to co-ordinate strategies for raising attendance.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unforeseen and unexpected situations. The Headteacher will not authorize absences if they are deemed to be detrimental to a student's education.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

## 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy rewards good attendance by issuing students with a rewards stamp each week if 100% attendance is achieved. Points are used to access rewards activities at the end of the Autumn and Summer Terms. Trophies and prizes are issued to the highest attending tutor groups within each house and there is a House Trophy for the highest attending House. There is also a whole school Awards' Evening to celebrate recognize student achievements. Attendance is communicated with parents and carers on student reports and via Go4schools system which parents can access regularly. All students are provided with a named person in their planner so that they have a person they can share worries or concerns with when in school. This way, any issues can be tackled immediately to ensure students feel safe to attend school. The Welfare and Safeguarding team is widely advertised in school so that students know who they can approach to seek guidance and support with concerns they may have.

Attendance is tracked regularly and there is a stringent tracking process in place to identify attendance patterns early. House Leaders send letters to parents once attendance is at 95%. If there is no improvement, a 2<sup>nd</sup> letter is issued. An attendance plan is implemented if there is still no improvement. A failure to improve attendance will result in a review meeting with the House Leader. If no improvement thereafter, a meeting with the Attendance Officer will occur and then a referral to the Education Inclusion Service. A range of strategies may be suggested depending upon the identified reason for poor attendance. These may include: early Help Assessment, referral to school nursing team, referral to counselling such as YICU, buddy systems, peer mentors, enrichment activities and other strategies.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The Student Liaison Officer (SLO) monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. Mrs Morris monitors whole school attendance weekly and liaises with the SLOs. The SLO's monitor students' attendance fortnightly and identify students whose attendance triggers an attendance procedure. The SLO's liaise directly with House Leaders to issue letters and start the attendance process. Letters are issued, followed by attendance plans, reviews of plans (stages 1-4) and then referrals to Mrs Rhoades and Education Inclusion Service if there is no improvement (stages 5 and 6). Home visits will be carried out by an SLO plus another staff member.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school, each day a student is ill.

If no contact is made with parents after 5 days, a 'Child Missing Education' referral will be made to the Local Authority.

***The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.***

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence

data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The attendance officer and Pastoral team**

The Attendance Officer and Pastoral Team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **7.4 Class teachers/form tutors**

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **7.5 Office/reception staff**

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system and liaise with SLO's.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

**Policy agreed: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019**  
**Policy reviewed: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020**

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

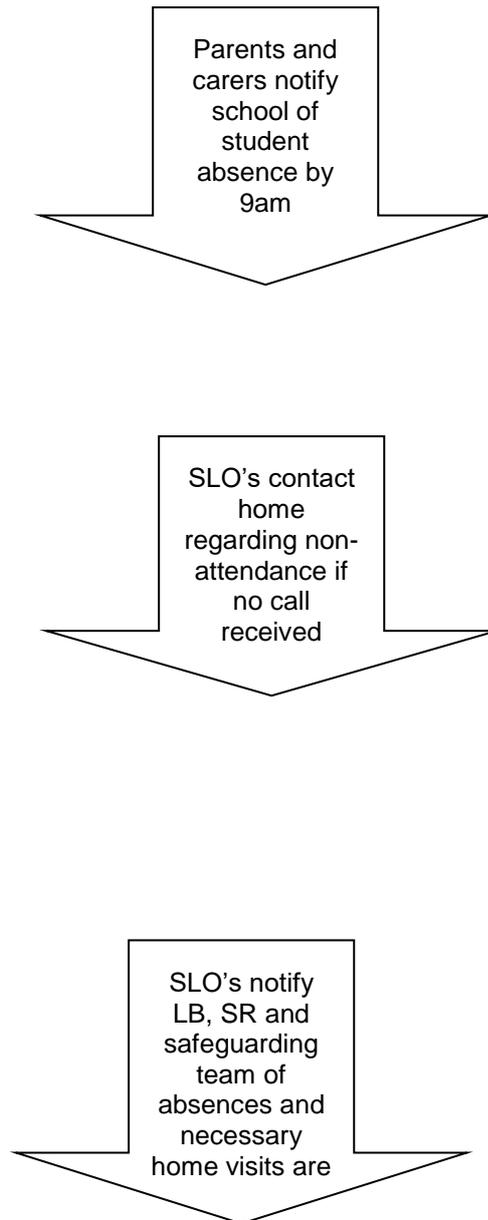
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

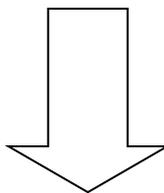
## Appendix 2: daily attendance procedure



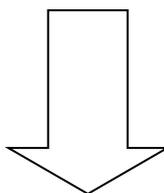
### Appendix 3: attendance process

SLO's run a report to monitor student attendance fortnightly. Students at 95% or lower are identified. SLO's liaise with House Leaders and stage 1 of the attendance process is issued. This is reviewed every 2 weeks and then next stage progressed towards unless there is evidence of improvement.

Attendance Officer runs a weekly report to monitor student attendance. Students identified below 95% are passed to SLO's to assess reasons why and begin the attendance process.



House Leader's monitor the attendance process and issue each stage between stages 1-4 in the attendance process. Parents and Carers are invited to attend an attendance meeting (stage 4) in which a support plan is implemented to raise attendance. A Range of strategies may be offered dependent upon the needs of individual students.



If there is no improvement in a student's attendance, stage 5 will be implemented and the Academy's Attendance Officer will request a meeting to assess support required. If this is not attended or if there is no improvement thereafter, the Attendance Officer will progress to stage 6: a referral to Education Inclusion Service.

## Appendix 4: attendance process

Stage	Description of actions	Led by	Expected outcome
1	SLO identifies a young person at 95% or lower. SLO liaises with House Leader and SCOO1 is issued to parents or carers.	SLO and HL	Student attends the academy and attendance increases.
2	Attendance is monitored by SLO. If there is no improvement after 2 weeks, the SLO liaises with the House Leader and SCOO2 is issued.	SLO and HL	Student attends the academy and attendance increases.
3	Attendance is monitored by SLO. If there is no improvement after 2 weeks, the SLO liaises with the House Leader and SCOO3 is issued, inviting parents/carers. They meet with the House Leader in to implement a support plan to improve attendance.	SLO HL leads the support plan meeting.	Barriers to attendance identified and interventions implemented to tackle issues identified. Attendance improves.
4	A review meeting takes place 2 weeks further to assess the impact of the support plan. House Leaders discuss attendance with parents/carers and if no improvement, it is referred to the Attendance officer within the Academy.	HL leads the support plan meeting.	Barriers to attendance reviewed and further interventions implemented to tackle issues identified where required. Attendance improves. Parents aware of escalating concerns.
5	The Attendance Officer invites parents in to discuss the lack of improvement and further strategies to raise attendance. The Attendance Officer informs parents/carers that a referral to Education Inclusion Service will be made if there is no significant improvement within the next 2 weeks.	Attendance Officer (SR)	Barriers to attendance reviewed and further interventions implemented to tackle issues identified. EHA may be offered. Attendance improves. Parents aware of impending referral to EIS if student does not attend the Academy.
6	Attendance Officer makes a referral to EIS. Paperwork is documented and strategies listed. Evidence of letters, meetings and interventions are evidenced for the EIS.	Attendance Officer (SR)	Support from EIS in place to aid the Academy in it's drive to increase attendance for the identified student.