



ST BENET BISCOP
CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

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1. Statement of Intent

At St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to strive for excellence. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. We are committed to ensuring that all families understand the importance of 100% attendance. Attendance in school is vital for academic success. Studies have shown that students who attend less than 95% of the time are less likely to achieve 5 grade 4 and above at GCSE and therefore are denied the chance to a successful, fulfilling life.

Research has shown that, even at the earliest age, children with poor attendance and punctuality are at a disadvantage later in life. They generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, they achieve less and they often suffer from poor self-esteem.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:



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- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

3.4 The attendance officers

The school attendance officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices



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The attendance officers are Mrs Bowman and Miss Smith and can be contacted via 01670 822795 and/or bowmans@stbb.org.uk smithk@stbb.org.uk

3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every school session on time
- Notify the school office of student absence. In the case of illness, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and then each day thereafter:
attendance@stbb.org.uk
My Child at School
01670 822795 – (option 1)
- The school will continue to phone home every day for a period of extended absence, even if the reason for absence is known.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4 Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

365 Days in a Year - 190 School Days in Total

ATTENDANCE DURING ONE SCHOOL YEAR	THIS NO. OF DAYS ABSENT	WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY THIS NO. OF WEEKS ABSENT	WHICH MEANS THIS NO. OF LESSONS MISSED
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
75%	48 days	10 weeks	250 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks	340 lessons

5 Procedures

5.1 Recording Attendance

- We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of every lesson.
- The school will contact parents on a daily basis if they fail to inform the school of an absence. The school must be notified of the reason for a child's absence in order to safeguard the child and protect their educational well-being.



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5.2 Unplanned absence

- The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence on the first day of absence, or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school:
attendance@stbb.org.uk
My Child at School
01670 822795 (**option 1**)
- We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. 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 unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- Continued unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice from the Local Authority.
- The school takes seriously its duty to safeguard the welfare of all its students. Unexplained absences and a lack of contact from parents may cause us concern and lead us to involve other agencies such as Children's Services. We will contact Children's Services within 2 days for any child with a Child Protection Plan.

5.3 Planned absence

- Routine medical and doctor's appointments should not be taken during term time. Students have 13 weeks' school holiday per year and further time off on teacher training days. We kindly ask parents to make routine doctor and dental appointments during these dates in order to avoid unnecessary absence. Any urgent medical and dental appointments must be authorised by completing the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form which is available from the Attendance Officer or on the website. If the absence is authorised, parents / carers must ensure they collect the student from visitors' reception as no student will be allowed out of the academy unaccompanied. Parents / carers must also ensure that the student is aware of the appointment and there is a note in the planner. It is not the responsibility of the academy to inform students of appointments. In emergency situations, we will ensure the student is aware of the appointment. In any other circumstances, the student has to make their own way to reception at the authorised time.
- For a day set aside exclusively for religious observance, students will be granted one day for each occasion of religious observance with a maximum of 3 days over one academic year. These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'R' code. These are the codes as stipulated by the Department for Education and whilst absence is authorised, it does count against the child's attendance. This is the national policy.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

Students must arrive in school by 8.45 on each school day.

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the beginning of the school day. The start of school sessions are used to give out instructions or to organise work. If a child arrives late, they can miss vital information from the class teacher, miss out on school work and cause disruption to their own learning and that of other students in the class.



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A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Detention is issued for lateness to school and lateness to lessons

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may visit the home or contact the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school may visit the home and consider involving an education welfare officer

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, via termly reports.

Student attendance is available for parents/carers on My Child at School.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Examples of what constitutes exceptional circumstances:

- Funeral of immediate family member
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- Urgent medical appointments (evidence must be provided). Schools should not authorise a whole day's absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.



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The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the website.

6.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored daily and absence and attendance data is interrogated to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns



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7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, student support managers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7.5 Strategies for promoting attendance

- Parental meetings are held to challenge and support our parents in raising the attendance of any child the school has concerns about.
- Where a child is failing to attend school, a plan will be drawn up in consultation with the family and, possibly, external agencies, including Education and Social Welfare workers.
- Students who are off school for a long period due to severe illness will be issued with optional work to carry out at home to avoid falling behind.
- The school rewards excellent attendance and those who have significantly improved their attendance with certificates, post cards, celebration assemblies and voucher prize draws.



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Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances



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E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed