



BCCET Attendance Policy

St. Joseph's Catholic Academy

Start Date:	Review Date:
September 2021	July 2023

Headteacher: Mr P. Mitchell

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Attendance:

Name:	Role:
Mr P. Mitchell	Headteacher
Mrs C. Hammill	Deputy Headteacher
Ms S. Burdis	Attendance Officer/Attendance Lead
Rebecca Anderson	BCCET Attendance Officer

Our School Attendance Aspiration is 100%
Our School Attendance Target is 97%

Attendance Policy

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust

The vision of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust is that “As a family of schools inspired by Christ, we aim to enable each individual to fulfil their God given potential.” Underpinning this, is the Trust’s mission of “Better Schools, Better Communities and Better Futures in Christ”.

In order to achieve both the Vision and Mission of the Trust, good attendance in our schools is crucial. In doing so, those in our Trust community will live out our six values: ‘Excellence’ can be achieved; ‘Respect’ is demonstrated; the sense of ‘Community’ is fostered; pupils can fully realise their unique ‘Gifts’; ‘Aspiration’ is developed; and achieving this goal, is a real ‘Celebration’.

St. Joseph’s Catholic Academy

Introduction

Our school is committed to a positive policy of encouraging students to attend school regularly. The school will work with parents and students to secure this aim. Through positive attendance we support our students in achieving their full potential. The other purpose of this attendance policy is to ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that students who should be attending the school have registered every lesson or a reason for non-attendance is known to the school and in this way we keep our students safe.

St. Joseph’s Catholic Academy Attendance Policy takes into account the guidance set out in the DFE Document ‘School Attendance; Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2020’.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. St. Joseph’s Catholic Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website or available from reception for those without access to the internet.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported

to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of, and are clear about, the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy, we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Attendance Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Recognise the role of class teachers as they will be able to identify where attendance is having an impact on attainment.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.

- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the BCCET Attendance Officer and/or the Local Authority or appropriate agencies of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the nominated person with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Maintaining class registers and completing them accurately in accordance with school policy, and forwarding completed registers to school office staff after registration closes.
- Informing the nominated person where there are concerns and acting upon them.

- Where poor attendance re occurs ensuring appropriate school staff are informed.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Ensuring appropriate school staff are informed of additional information provided by the child so it can be recorded in line with school policy
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making and supporting referrals to the Local Authority
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with BCCET Attendance Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Late Book is completed
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head teacher to address
- Liaising with the BCCET Attendance Officer to monitor attendance and implement strategies for improvement on a whole school and individual basis.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance regularly and consistently
- First Day Response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or text message) in support with Attendance Officer.

Attendance Officer are responsible for:

At St. Joseph's Catholic Academy we have employed an Attendance Officer to offer additional support to Parents / carers and pupils. This includes support in relation to:

- Improving school attendance by carrying out home visits, attending meeting with the parent / carer
- To identify with parents the reason for poor attendance and work with parents to achieve improved attendance and reduce exclusions
- Monitor attendance levels & punctuality
- Offer parent contracts and attendance plans
- Identify patterns of absence
- Talk to pupils on a 1:1 basis regarding attendance related matters

- Offer group work sessions to remove the barriers to attendance including friendship groups
- Refer to outside agencies for additional support for families including School Health, CYPS, Attendance Service, Police, Youth Offending Team & Social Care

BCCET Attendance Officer is responsible for:

The Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust have an Attendance Officer in post to support schools with their attendance and offer additional support to Parents/Carers and Pupils. This includes support in relation to:

- Improving school attendance by carrying out home visits and attending meetings with the parent/carer(s)
- To identify with the school and parent/carer(s) the reason for poor attendance and work with both the school and parent/carer(s) to achieve improved attendance and reduce exclusions
- Work with the Senior Leadership Team and Attendance Officer, where appropriate, to monitor attendance levels, identify patterns of absence and create strategies to improve attendance
- Support the school with parent contracts and attendance plans, where necessary
- Talk to pupils on a 1:1 basis regarding attendance related matters, where requested by the school
- Work alongside the Senior Leadership Team with referrals to outside agencies for additional support for families including School Health, CYPS, Attendance Service, Police, Youth Offending Team & Social Care, where necessary
- Working alongside the BCCET Mental Health Co-ordinator and Counselling Service

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent

or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Registers

1. Registers are legal documents and will be marked twice a day (AM/PM)
2. Parents must always give reasons for absence to the school.
3. Schools are to determine whether absence is authorised or unauthorised in exceptional circumstances, considering factors such as frequency, duration, attendance patterns, i.e. within reason. Staff must be observant of situations where absence is continually condoned by parents.

The guidelines below clarify possible actions

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
Illness	Absence without a valid reason
Medical Appointment / Dental (For the time of appointment including travelling)	Latecomers beyond 30 minutes after the session has started
Family Bereavement	Persistent lateness within the first 30 minutes of the day
Religious Observance	Babysitting children including siblings.
Interview / Work Experience	Shopping during school time.
Excluded Children	Special occasions, e.g. birthday.
Sports / Music / Exams	Holidays
Agreed other educational activity at the discretion of the Head teacher	

Reintegrating Long Term Absentees

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so staff may wish to arrange a phased or gradual return, allocation of a 'Key Worker', consider whether

Special Needs support is appropriate, ensure that all staff are aware of the situation and nominate a key person to monitor the child's reintegration into school. All children must feel welcomed back and know from whom they can seek help. Never leave children sitting in corridors or outside an office for long periods.

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.30am. Pupils are expected on site by 8.40am with registration beginning at 8.45am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher in the first 5 minutes of morning registration or the afternoon lesson starting.

All attendance records are documented using the School Management Information System. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of 1996 Education Act. The school seeks to improve general punctuality and to improve attitude of persistent offenders by:-

- a. Informing parents of our expectations and offer ways of helping combat lateness.
- b. Parents of persistent offenders must be contacted, and reported to the Attendance Officer if no improvement.
- c. Praise and acknowledge latecomers who improve.
- d. Ensure that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons.
- e. All children and parents must understand that lateness is actively discouraged, although sensitivity may be appropriate in some cases.
- f. Schools may use other incentives to improve levels of punctuality
- g. The Attendance Officer will be used to support pupils and families with any of the above issues.

Once the doors are closed at 8.45am the only way to get into school is via the visitor reception. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.45am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child

who arrives for school later than 9.10am (close of morning registration) will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues. School has sanctions in place to deter and sanction students who are late; these students are monitored and supported by the Pastoral Team who liaise with families.

Pupils who are late:

School will record lateness and pupils will be issued with sanctions including after-school detentions which will escalate in duration if lateness is persistent. School will work closely with families to support rectifying persistent lateness.

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. Parents will be contacted by the pastoral team if punctuality does become a concern. It is our wish that parents understand the importance we place on high behavioural standards and support us in our determination to maintain them.

Pupils who leave school without permission after the register has been taken are putting themselves at great risk. The school will contact the parents of the pupil as soon as it is aware a pupil has left school without permission.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full and accurate details of the reason for their absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will contact home including sending a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to

complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff and the Attendance Officer check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will attempt to contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home and operate remotely, where appropriate, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school. For example, we may work with South Tyneside Local Authority Alternative Education team to consider Home Tuition.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card/letter or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries. Alternatively, we may make a referral to the School Health Advisor to offer support.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head Teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Parents are encouraged to keep open lines of communication with school over absence as persistent absence can be considered a safeguarding matter.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 97%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In our school, parents are to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. If we become concerned about your child's attendance, we will inform parents/carers of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via letters which are sent home. In some cases, parents/carers may

be offered a parent contract. A parent contract is an agreement / action plan which looks at ways to work together to improve attendance. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. It is common practice that this may be escalated to the BCCET Attendance Officer. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time with support from the school, then it is the responsibility of the school to make a referral to the LA Attendance Officer.

The Attendance Service will look at each case and may issue fixed penalty notices to parents where there is poor attendance.

The LA Attendance Service working jointly with Legal Services may also consider:

- Applying for a parenting order
- Applying for an education supervision order
- School Attendance Order (If parent has not registered their child in a school)
- Community Order

The LA Attendance Officer can remotely check and monitor attendance levels. The LA Attendance Officer regularly carries out register checks to identify children with low attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the School Information Management System. Regular meetings are held with the Head teacher and the BCCET Attendance Officer to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

St. Joseph's Catholic Academy we follow a traffic light system. The purpose of colour coding helps Staff, Parents and Pupils to have a clear understanding of our expectations. (See appendix 1).

- **Red Zone: Under 92%**
Students in the red zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult and misbehave. Legal action may also be taken against Parents/Carers of Red Zone pupils.
- **Amber Zone: 92% - 96.99%**
Students in this zone are still at risk of underachieving due to the absence level. Students who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress. If your child in the Amber Zone we will contact you to complete a Parent Contract to help avoid attendance falling into the Red Zone.
- **Green Zone: 97%+**
We expect students to have Green attendance throughout their education. Those in the Green are more likely to do well in examinations, have better job opportunities and can develop strong friendships within school.

Rewards & Recognition

Although good attendance is an expectation the school seeks to improve whole school attendance by offering incentives, this may include:

- 100% Certificates
- Prizes
- Positive Texts, Postcards, Letters
- Head of House and Headteacher commendation award

Appendix

Appendix 1: Traffic Light System



Below 92%

Between 92-96.99%

Above 97%

Appendix 2: South Tyneside Absence from School Guidance/FlowChart



South Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership

1. Questions to consider:

- Is there a familiar pattern to non-attendance? For example is the absence at a certain time of day/lesson or on a particular day of the week?
- Has attendance decreased dramatically recently?
- What is happening for the child / at school / at home?
- Any previous history of attendance concerns?
- Has the child/young person reached the statutory limit of 10 days non-attendance (please refer to local authority statutory guidance for non-attendance)

2. Determine the reason for the absence / poor attendance (list not exhaustive):

- Medical issues
- Truancy

- Bereavement
- Temporary anxiety about something IN school such as a test, particular event or a falling out with friends/peers
- Temporary anxiety about something OUT of school such as parental illness.
- Long-term anxiety about something IN school such as bullying, a certain member of staff, school subject
- Long term anxiety about something out of school including family situations such as domestic violence
- Exploitation
- Young Carer Responsibilities

3. **Screening tools to be used:**

- School Refusal Assessment Scale (Haarman). The tool is designed to give an inclination as to the main factors that contribute to a child refusing to go to school. This can be a useful tool to use as it can direct discussion and further actions to take.
- CSE Screening Tool – this is designed to assess the risks (Low, Medium, High) of the child / YP to exploitation and may result in a referral to the MSET group
- Return to School / College Conversation Form – this will gather information through a conversation with the child / YP around the reasons for them going missing from school and may link with the CSE Screening tool and the Statutory RHI process

4. **Mental Health Concerns**

It is important to ascertain the cause of the Mental Health Concern and will be a key role of the Team Around the Child.

5. **Team Around The Child**

Early consultation is **KEY** as it allows all those services and agencies who are or may become involved with the child/young person to share information, identify need and formulate an appropriate plan in partnership with the child / YP and parents / carers. Agencies may be able to offer advice and guidance as to how the situation can be managed in school.

In school strategies to use might include:

- “Nurturing” group
- One to one pastoral support, e.g. mentoring
- Buddy systems
- Whole school emotional wellbeing initiatives
- Mental Health Champion input and support
- Timetable changes / internal moves

Medical Home Tuition is a **short term intervention** that can be put in place if there is a mental health need identified within the agreed plan by the Team Around Child.

It is important to involve parents in all stages and to maintain frequent communication. The Team Around the Child will meet at agreed intervals to monitor the progress of the plan.

As the plan progresses, further referrals and considerations by the Team Around the Child could be:

- Attendance Team
- Connexions
- CYPS/CAMHS
- Early Help Team/Family Support Worker (for support with process)
- Educational Psychology Service
- Emotional Resilience Team
- Lifecycle
- Pupil Services
- School Nurse

- Services for Young People

Things to remember:

- Parents should be involved in every stage of the process.
- It is important for the child/YP to have a voice in any process wherever possible. Consider if there are any other needs how the child/YP's voice will be heard in the process.
- Legal and statutory responsibilities must be adhered to at all times.



