



St Benedict's Catholic High School

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: September 2020

Date of next review: September 2023

Members of Staff responsible for overseeing that this policy is Implemented and regularly reviewed:

Jon Shires (Headteacher)

Samantha Caherty (Senior Assistant Headteacher)

Signature (Chair of Governors):

Date:

Signature (Headteacher):

Date:

Section 1: Introduction

St Benedict's Seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive full-time education which maximises opportunities to realise their full potential.

The School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment with engaging learning experiences, so pupils, feel valued and secure. It is a high priority at St Benedict's to work in partnership with pupils, families and outside agencies to provide encouragement, information, advice and support.

School staff will work with pupils and their families to encourage every student to attend school regularly and punctually. Children who miss out on education are at an immediate disadvantage to their peers, at a great cost to themselves.

One day a fortnight away from school means a child will have lost half a year's schooling by the time they reach the end of Year Eleven.

Our attendance procedures seek to reward and incentivise excellent attendance across the entire school. We seek to achieve this by providing pupils with a learning environment that they value and want to attend. Where pupils do not respond, we will challenge pupils and parents who regard attendance as low priority and provide for those who need further support in improving their attendance.

1.1

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the standard of attendance and punctuality is outstanding by:

- Improving the percentage of pupils who attend school
- Reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent
- Ensuring attendance and punctuality are a priority for all
- Providing support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- Promoting effective communication and partnership with pupils, parents, the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement team, and other outside services and agencies.

The objective of this policy is to make outstanding attendance and punctuality embedded across all aspects of the school by:

- Supporting teachers, form tutors, and pastoral team in promoting and monitoring outstanding attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring legal requirements and school policy are clear to pupils, parents and others
- Working in partnership with parents and pupils and other agencies
- Recognising the needs of the individual pupils when planning attendance support

Section 2: Working in partnership: Parents

2.1 Responsibility and legal requirements

By Law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a proper full time Education. Parents are responsible for making this happen, either by registering the child at school or by making other arrangements, which provide an effective education. (The education Act 1996 – section 7).

The government expects young people to be in education and/or work based training until their 18th birthday. Therefore, parents/carers should make every effort to encourage their children to attend sixth form if that is their chosen route.

The term 'Parent' also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child or who have care of the child (children Act 1989 and Education Act 1996).

A child should come into school every day. They should only be absent if the reason is unavoidable or there are significant health reasons. Every half day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the reason for each absence is required.

A child's education is a partnership between the school and the parent(s) and if there is reluctance for your child towards school, please contact us rather than condoning the absence by providing an excuse. We will do what we can to support you and your child.

It is the Headteacher that makes the final decision on whether to authorise any absence from school.

2.3 How Parents/Carers help:

- Aim for your child to have school attendance as close to 100% as possible, our school target aims for 97% as a minimum expectation; (in attendance terms even 95% is not 'good')
- Organise your child so that they attend registration periods on time every day
- Help your child be confident about attending school
- Ensure they have the correct uniform and stationary; pens, pencils etc.
- Encourage them to complete their homework properly and on time
- Talk to your child about difficulties they may be experiencing
- If your child is experiencing difficulty contact your child's form tutor or the pastoral team and the school will attempt to support them

2.3.1 Absence

Your child must only miss school if they are affected by a significant illness, or unavoidable issue. On the first day of absence a parent/carer must contact the school by 9.00am, giving the reason for absence. The same applies to each subsequent day of absence. If contact is not made Attendance officer will send communication home via Parent mail text message.

When your child returns to school they should bring a signed and dated note from the parent giving the reason for the absence, the school will consider notes from parents when determining whether non-attendance is authorised or unauthorised. Notes will be kept on file. In the case of no contact from parents' letters will be sent home at the end of each week to ask for the reason for absence. If there is still no contact from parents this absence will automatically be unauthorised.

2.3.2 Punctuality / Lateness

Morning Registration begins at 8.50am. Afternoon registration takes place at the beginning of period 4 starting at 1.30pm. Please ensure your child arrives at school punctually; if arriving late please provide a written explanation for any late arrival. Anyone attending registration late without a valid note or reason from home will be sanctioned for their lateness. Lateness to morning registration results in a 20-minute detention during lunch on the same day in the first instance and increasing to a 30-minute lunch time detention for more than one late in the same week. Where persistent lateness becomes apparent, it will result in further exploration of the cause and a likely a sanction (see detention procedure described later in this policy). Pupils arriving after 9.00am and 1.35pm will be recorded as 'unauthorised late' after the register has closed.

2.3.3 Medical appointments

Please avoid Medical appointments in school time, Doctors and dentists are used to requests for appointments that won't disrupt schooling and will try to accommodate where an appointment during school hours is unavoidable, pupils must only be absent for the duration of that appointment; i.e. leave school only for the time necessary to attend the appointment and then return to school the same day. Evidence must be provided for all medical appointments that are

in school time and should be given to the Attendance Officer either on the same or following day. This could be a copy of prescription stickers or appointment letters/cards, or confirmation being shown as a text on a mobile.

2.3.4 Medication

When your children are unwell with a headache, cold or suffering with minor allergies please send them into school with enough medication to give them some relief at lunch time to help them get through the day. If this needs to be stored in a fridge we have one based in the front office and if you would prefer medication to be kept in the front office that does not need to be kept cold we have a lockable medicine cabinet in which we can store them. Any stored medication must be approved, and the appropriate forms completed.

2.3.5 Prevent your child becoming a persistent absentee

Pupils with below 90% attendance are officially classed as persistent absentees. Being considered a persistent absentee has serious implications. Colleges and Employers normally ask for pupil's attendance when requesting references. Pupils with such low attendance are also significantly less likely to do well academically and we know this may affect their life chances. As a school we have implemented Attendance Improvement Plans (AIP's). If your child was identified as a persistent absentee the previous term or academic school year, they will be placed onto a Level 1 AIP should their attendance fall below 90%. The Level 1 AIP will be completed by the Form Tutor. If your child's attendance does not improve, your child will move on to a Level 2 AIP. This will be completed by the Attendance Officer and you will be invited to a meeting so we can work together and support your child in improving their attendance. If there is still no improvement, your child will go onto a Level 3 AIP. This will involve a meeting with the Head of Year and may include involvement from external agencies. If a pupil is identified a persistent absentee they will become the focus of significant intervention to improve their attendance. Parents will be involved as will the school and where appropriate, Warwickshire Attendance Services and other agencies. Parents of persistent absentees may be issued with fines and may be required to attend court.

2.3.6 Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil regulations) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2013

- Head teachers shall not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider Leave of Absence applications made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by fixed penalty.
- If a fixed penalty notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire county council's legal services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under Section 444 of Education Act 1991.
- Each application for a leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Section 3: Working in Partnership: Pupils

Our Expectations

- All Pupils are expected to attend school registrations and all of their lessons regularly and punctually.
- Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from tutor/class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the pastoral team.
- Pupils who achieve high attendance or improved attendance are acknowledged through the reward system.

- Any pupil wishing to go home ill during the school day must have their planner signed by either their Form tutor if during break or lunchtime or the subject teacher they are with during lesson. Once they have their planner signed they must go to the school office where a member of staff will contact home to ensure they are able to be collected. The pupil will sign out using the electronic system once they are collected.
- Pupils signing out for medical appointments must also report to the front office and sign out on the electronic system and must be collected from the main office by an appropriate adult.
- Staff will only agree to a child potentially going home if they feel the child is suffering from a significant illness. This will only be sanctioned by a member of the Leadership Team or a member of the Pastoral Team. It is our expectation that children attending school stay in school. Minor colds and headaches are not significant illnesses. Please see (section 2.3.4)

Section 4: Working in partnership: The School

4.1 Duty of Schools

1. School staff will inform Parents of the attendance of their child. School staff will monitor the attendance of all pupils and will pay close attention to those that may be at higher risk of having poor attendance or falling attendance.
2. Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching and pastoral staff). The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism firmly and consistently.
3. Under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly and punctually at the school where he/she is a registered pupil. In Law, parents have the responsibility for ensuring that pupils attend school regularly.
4. The School is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised. Ultimately, the final decision on whether to authorise absence from school is the head teacher.
5. In law, attendance registers are required to be called twice each day. When this is done each pupil must be coded present, engaged in an approved educational activity or absent.

Section 5: Working in partnership: Warwickshire Attendance service (WAS)

The Warwickshire Attendance Service is a partner in ensuring support for pupils whose attendance is causing concern.

Procedure:

- Attendance Officers will regularly highlight pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and meets Warwickshire Attendance Services criteria for brought in or statutory support
- In consultation with the form tutors and pastoral team as appropriate, a formal referral will be made to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS).
- The WAS service will establish Attendance panels which will meet as dictated by the number of cases meeting the panel's criteria
- The WAS worker allocated to work with St Benedict's will consider home visits to discuss attendance concerns which may be unannounced.
- Monitoring, intervention and support will be allocated for identified pupils
- Where intervention and support do not result in a positive outcome, issuing of fixed penalty fines and prosecution may follow.

Section 6: Procedures: Rewards, Sanctions and intervention

6.1 Rewards System

The rewards system will be reviewed regularly to maximise pupil enthusiasm and ensure affordability. Examples of possible rewards include:

- Displays outside of the main front office that help to engage pupils in their attendance
- Letters of praise to acknowledge good or improved attendance
- Certificates will be awarded termly to all pupils who achieve above 98% attendance
- Rewards assemblies will be done at the end of each term, certificate and badges awarded to those with 100% attendance.
- Termly rewards activities will take place in the last week of term.

6.2 Support for those with poor attendance

Helping to resolve any valid reason affecting attendance.

The School will use a variety of strategies including:

- Display outside the main office showing the affect poor attendance has on overall learning
- Assemblies on the importance of good attendance
- Attendance Improvement Plans to support realistic and achievable targets.
- Highlighting and discussing issues via escalating attendance meetings. These will involve pupils, parents or carers and school staff: Heads of Years, Pastoral team. Attendance meetings may also involve staff from other agencies. Where formal meetings are held, targets will be set and where appropriate, sent home. If parents or carers do not attend meetings concerning their Child's attendance, targets will be set in their absence. Records will be kept on file for future reference and may form part of the evidence base for issuing fixed penalty fines and instigating legal proceedings
- Contact to all parents whose child's attendance falls below 95% by letter.
- Contact from school, on a minimum of three occasions per year, informing parents or carers of the level of attendance for their children
- Referral to Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS), or appropriate support from other external agencies (See also possible interventions section below)

St Benedict's Catholic High School Attendance Strategy

In July 2011 the DFE changed the PA threshold from 20% to 10%. Any child who now has 90% attendance or lower is a Persistent Absentee (PA) and will be referred to the WAS team using the ACE referral form. There continues to be a national drive to reduce the number of Persistent Absentees. A Persistent Absentee (PA) is a pupil with 90% attendance or less whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

The school attendance target is 97%. This figure is communicated to parents, staff and pupils. The School may follow the process as outlined below:

99 - 100%	Excellent
97 - 99%	Good – Students with attendance between 98-100% will receive a certificate of achievement.
96 – 95%	Cause for Concern/ Monitored by form tutor and first letter of concern. (AIP Level 1 as appropriate)
91 – 94%	Serious Cause for Concern/ Monitored by pastoral team second letter of concern, and initial meeting with parents and pupil and targets set. (AIP Levels 2 and 3 as appropriate)
90% and below.	Classed as persistent absentee, Referral to WAS, and potential legal action. (AIP Levels 4 and 5 as appropriate)

The Attendance Officer has responsibility for the compilation and distribution of monitoring grid / lists every two weeks to the Assistant Head of Pastoral Care. Students falling below the attendance threshold will be added to an attendance watch list and the school attendance protocol will be followed. (please see the Attendance Intervention Flow Chart below).

6.3 Detention Procedure

A Pupil is to be marked late (L) if they are not in the form room by 9.00am for morning registration or 1.35pm for afternoon registration.

The following Detention Sanctions will be applied:

- If a pupil arrives late to morning registration after 9.00am they will receive a C1 on Classcharts and will receive a 20 minute lunch time detention that same day.
- Where persistent lateness exists, the school will attempt to identify the cause of the persistent lateness and remedy the situation; this may include additional pastoral support or school sanctions as outlined in the behaviour policy. Parents/Carers will be made aware of the issue and a course of action appropriate for that child will be decided upon. This may be that the individual student may be placed on a punctuality report card which will be checked by their Head of Year daily and Attendance Officer weekly.

6.4 Possible Interventions

The school will consider a wide range of intervention where pupils are identified as needing support. The list is not exhaustive, as interventions will be used where they are thought appropriate to each pupil's circumstances. These may include:

- Interview with pupil
- Adjustment to pupil timetable
- Mentoring
- Offering the pupil a buddy
- Targeted rewards
- School linking into home rewards system
- Meeting between pupil, tutor and pastoral team
- Home visit from the Pastoral Team or Attendance Officer
- Internal panel meeting with pupil, pastoral team, senior staff and parent/carer
- Meeting between parents, school staff and other professionals
- Referral to CAMHS
- Consideration of EHA (Early Help Assessment)
- Enrolment in appropriate extracurricular activities
- Introducing parent to the Triple P course

6.5 Procedures: Monitoring and Evaluation

6.5.1 Monitoring

- Attendance matters will be regularly discussed in senior leadership, team meetings and appropriate governor meetings
- The Pastoral team and the Attendance officer will monitor all pupil attendance, with particular emphasis on those with less than 95% and who are likely to be referred to WAS.
- The Attendance officer will send a letter home to parents to inform them of deteriorating attendance and Pupils will be met with by the Attendance Officer and Pastoral team members. Please see Attendance intervention process below.
- Senior staff, the Attendance officer Heads of Year or the pastoral team will contact parents where there are attendance concerns and improvements are not forthcoming.
- Unannounced home visits may be carried out if still no improvements made.
- Senior staff will produce an attendance report for Governors. The report is given regularly throughout the year.
- Where a pupil is absent for a medical reason, the school may request medical evidence relating to the absence.
- Pupils whose medical absences give cause for concern may have circumstances referred to the Head of Year and pastoral team.
- Attendance officer will meet with the head of the pastoral team weekly with attendance data for main school and vulnerable groups, data will include comparison with like for like data

- Attendance officer will circulate lates reports to all tutors, Heads of Year and pastoral team at the end of each week.

Attendance Intervention Process Flow Chart

STAGE 1	Attendance Monitoring can take place at any point a student's attendance causes concern. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send Attendance Letters home informing parents/carers attendance is causing concern Students met and school attendance discussed placed on level 1 AIP (FormTutor) 	Attendance Letters Sent
Persistent Absentees report less than 90% attendance will run every week.		
STAGE 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance Meeting to be arranged with Parent/Carer and student to go through government/School expectations No further absences to be authorised without evidence Review progress and monitor student details via weekly persistent absence log Consider any further support through Pastoral/outside agencies/Early Help single assessment Attendance target will be set and monitored through an AIP Level 2 (Attendance Officer). If no improvement after two weeks, pupils will be moved onto a Level 3 AIP (HoY & External Case Worker from Warwickshire Attendance Service) Inform parent/carers of progress by letter 	Family Support Meeting
STAGE 3	If no improvement is seen or improvement is slow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further attendance meeting for parents and carers that will be with the Assistant Head Teacher (AHT) and supported by Warwickshire Attendance services. Monitoring will be through a Level 4 AIP. Continue weekly monitor Inform parent/carers and Warwickshire Attendance Service of progress 	Family Support Meeting
STAGE 4	If Attendance target is not met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete referral to Warwickshire Attendance Services Request meeting with parents/Carers – Level 5 AIP implemented with AHT Weekly monitoring – WAS informed of any absence. 	WAS Referral
Notes For	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent Absence log to be maintained and updated weekly Once a student is logged NO absence should be authorised without evidence Warwickshire Attendance Services or other appropriate external agencies and 	

File	SLT to review high priority cases regularly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors to be advised when Attendance intervention is put in place • Student met on a regular basis by Attendance Officer or SLT 	
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6.5.2 Evaluation

Evaluation of attendance strategies will include regular interrogation of attendance data for the main school, year groups, vulnerable groups and persistent absentees. The rate of persistent absence in comparison to previous years may also be used. These reports will be analysed by The Pastoral team will then use these to form the basis of improvement strategies to be discussed with the Assistant Headteacher, Headteacher, School Governors or WAS service as appropriate.

6.5.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Tutor Responsibilities

- Registers are to be taken at 8.55am and 1.30pm and returned to the Attendance Officer in the pastoral office immediately.
- Tutors should be with their tutees by 8.50am.
- Any pupils arriving after 9.00am should be marked as late.
- On an assembly day tutors must register their tutees in the hall either by taking a register on SIMS or on a manual register which will be provided by a member of the pastoral team.
- Pupils should be periodically reminded of the procedure for 'Late' registration and the legal importance of registration.

Teaching staff Responsibilities

All Teachers must take an accurate register of the pupils in their class, using SIMS within the first ten minutes of each lesson.

Attendance officer's responsibilities:

- Maintain and update attendance displays on a weekly basis
- Provide all form tutors with year to date attendance of their tutees on a weekly basis
- Produce unexplained absence list for tutors to use in clarifying the reason
- Input all attendance coding information
- Contact home using parentmail on the 1st day where reason for absence is not known. Where there is no response, a phone call to parents is made
- Refer any concerns to the pastoral team
- Retain applications for term-time holiday absence, process holiday requests and inputting codes
- Maintain files on individual pupils' attendance, intervention strategies and outcomes
- Discuss with pupils why they were late and offer advice or liaise with parents where persistent lateness occurs
- Monitor attendance of: main school, houses, individual pupils or specific groups as directed
- Meet with pupils whose attendance is causing concern and to offer advice and support.
- Produce certificates/letters home to celebrate and promote high pupil attendance
- Produce letter informing parents when pupils fall below attendance thresholds
- Liaise with parents regarding home visits if necessary
- Encourage pupils with good attendance by liaising with parents verbally or in writing as appropriate.
- Meet with Attendance Reps to distribute attendance charts and discuss rewards.

Appendix 3

Example of information to be shared termly with parents regarding leave of absence Reminder for Parents.

Leave of Absence during Term Time As you will all be aware, current attendance regulations stipulate a Head teacher may not grant a leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

It is for the Head Teacher to decide what he/she views as 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted.

If the leave is granted, the head teacher is able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application.

If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Failure to make an application for leave in advance can also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the required timeframe as set out on the notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 Education Act 1996.

Parents are asked to respect the new regulations under which the school must work and if there is a need to take a child out of school during term-time, an application or request must be made in advance and make clear how the circumstances are exceptional.