

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

Attendance Policy

Attendance Policy



**“I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.” John 10v10**

Bishop Vaughan’s policy is informed by the school’s Catholic ethos. At Bishop Vaughan, we challenge all those involved with the school to use their God given gifts to achieve excellence and make significant progress in their learning.

We believe that regular school attendance is a critical contributory factor to a productive and successful career. Full and/or improved attendance will be actively promoted and encouraged for all our pupils. Research has proven that irregular school attendance significantly damages academic progress and achievement. At Bishop Vaughan, we therefore strive to encourage high school attendance through nurturing positive relationships with students and ensuring that the school is happy, safe, secure and stimulating learning and teaching environment.

### **Aims**

The aims of this policy are:

- To establish and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality in our pupils;
- To provide a context for the implementation of the School Attendance Framework.

### **Objectives for Pupils**

- Attend school regularly and on time striving to achieve 95% or more attendance.
- Arrive on time for all lessons and be appropriately prepared for the school day.
- Inform a member of staff of any problem that may hinder attendance at school.
- Inform the Attendance staff of any future planned absences.
- Be aware of their current attendance percentage and the impact of attendance on attainment.

### **Objectives for Parents**

- Ensure their children attend school regularly, as required by law.
- Contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend school on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that their children arrive on time and are well-prepared for the school day.
- Keep in contact with school with confidence and inform the Attendance staff, Associate SLT responsible for Attendance or Head of Year if any problem occurs which may hinder their child's regular attendance, discipline or behaviour in school.
- Seek to attend meetings in school to discuss their child.

### **Objectives for the School**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance, am and pm.
- Early and sensitive contact with parents when a pupil is absent where no appropriate reason has been provided.
- Early and sensitive action on any problem notified to us.
- Reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.

- Implement procedures on reintegration depending on length of period of absence.
- Regular evaluation of attendance procedures by Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and school governors.
- Work towards ensuring all pupils feel supported and valued.
- Operate a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data in order to target attendance-related issues.
- To identify pupils and groups of pupils whose absence is giving cause for concern and to target resources to work towards the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.
- To promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where members of the school community are aware of their roles and responsibilities through the School Attendance Framework.
- Raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- Research existing good practice in promoting attendance and inclusion.

### **Objectives for School Governors**

- To evaluate the latest attendance data which is reported termly to the Governing Body
- In conjunction with the Headteacher, help set realistic but challenging targets for improvements in school attendance within the context of the family of schools, Local Authority and Wales data. Comparative figures for the last three years to be available for Governors.

## **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Class Teachers**

- Aim to accurately complete registers within 5 minutes of the start of the lesson, **every** lesson. If, in rare circumstances, the electronic register cannot be taken during the lesson, this must be done on paper and sent to the Attendance Office.
- Ensure that all pupils within lessons are able to access the learning through a range of teaching and learning strategies in line with the school's Learning Policy.
- Ensure that pupils in each class who are underachieving owing to absence, are identified and Heads of Department are informed.
- Identify, within each lesson, any pupils who clearly should be present in the lesson but are not.
- Monitor carefully the attendance of individuals within a class and alert the Head of Department and appropriate Head of Year and/or Associate SLT responsible for Attendance where patterns of non-attendance are detected.
- When a pupil is known to have truanted from their lesson, follow this up by making sure they have caught up the missed work in subject detention time.
- Ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for long-term absentees and those on fixed-term exclusions, so that return to school is made as easy as possible.
- Ensure that those who return from long-term absence are provided with appropriate support to enable them to access the learning within the lesson.

- Welcome back pupils from long-term absence in a professional manner

### **Heads of Department**

- Monitor attendance within their subject area and follow up anomalies between levels of attendance in different classes.
- Promote good practice in the reintegration of absent pupils and setting of work for long-term absent or excluded pupils.
- Consider the link between attainment and attendance in subject areas, liaising directly with parents and Heads of Year as appropriate.

### **Form Tutors**

- Ensure that the register for morning registration is accurately completed (legal requirement).
- Take action to request absence notes from returning pupils. Where absence notes are not provided within a week of the absence in spite of your actions, alert the Head of Year and / or Associate SLT responsible for Attendance and inform him/her of the action you have already taken.
- Ensure that any absence notes provided by parents or guardians are passed on to the Attendance staff as soon as possible.
- Collect and scrutinise absence notes and alert the Head of Year and / or Associate SLT responsible for Attendance if professional judgment suggests that these are forged. Tackle any instances of inappropriate absence with the pupil and alert the Head of Year and / or Associate SLT responsible for Attendance so that parental contact can be made.
- Encourage high attendance through constant reinforcement of individual and class targets and through encouraging pupils to want to be the best-attending form in the Year.
- Emphasise the role of Attendance Rewards.
- Liaise with Head of Year and / or Associate SLT responsible for Attendance as early as possible where there are issues of attendance with individual pupils, groups within the form or the whole form.

### **Associate SLT responsible for Attendance**

- Monitor carefully the attendance of pupils across the school, taking note of any patterns amongst pupils from particular groups, particular times of the week or particular subject areas. Inform SLT of any identified patterns.
- Oversee the efficient running of the Registration system and take action where registers are not being completed accurately.
- Monitor the attendance within the Key Stage or Year Group where pupils are identified as having poor attendance.
- Work with targeted pupils to improve attendance through parental contact, attendance reports, short-term targets and rewards.
- Monitor particularly closely the attendance of persistent absentees, those with deteriorating levels of attendance, and those at risk of disaffection, using short-term targets and attendance reports as necessary.
- Keep in contact with long-term absentees. Ensure that effective reintegration strategies are used, identifying "catch up" needs.
- Foster a positive attitude to school attendance within the Key Stage and Year Group through assemblies, the form noticeboards and constant reinforcement

with pupils. Encourage a spirit of healthy competition between forms and individuals.

- Liaise with subject teachers to ensure that appropriate work is set for long-term absentees and those excluded from school.
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Meet with the EWO regularly to identify referrals, providing full details and additional information for cases where court action is required.
- Carry out duties in line with the School Attendance Framework.
- Ensure that induction of new teachers includes training about taking a register.
- To analyse attendance data in relation to school performance and benchmarking.

### **Heads of Year**

- Ensure discussion about attendance is an integral part of Pupil Progress Meetings.
- Carry out all duties in line with the School Attendance Framework.

### **EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE**

The EWO will support the school by:

- Making home visits and will also be available in school to interview pupils and their parents.
- Making judgments in co-operation with school staff and other agencies in line with statutory duties in relation to school attendance.
- Providing interim welfare support to pupils and their families and through assessment of their needs, engage a multi-agency response to addressing those needs.
- Providing an independent approach to supporting the school community in particular with advice relating to the management of school attendance.
- Assist the school in analysing data and identifying patterns of absence and punctuality.
- Carrying out duties with regard to statutory intervention in cases of irregular school attendance.

### **CATEGORISING ABSENCE**

A mark will be recorded in respect of each pupil during each period of the school day. Any child who is not present for morning or afternoon registration will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. Amendments will be carried out by the Attendance staff.

Bishop Vaughan School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. The school will notify the School and Governor Unit if a pupil on the Child Protection register has an unexplained absence of more than two days' duration from school (or more than one day following a weekend).

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If no explanation about an absence is received within two weeks, the Attendance staff will send a letter to parents requesting an explanation. If no explanation is received within one week the absence will remain as unauthorised.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a) Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example,
  - A pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;
  - A pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion — in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the case and the pupil's overall attendance will be considered by the Headteacher.
- b) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- c) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards — or send him/her to school beforehand);
- d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for absence which is beyond the family's control;
- e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs;
- f) In other exceptional circumstances (e.g. family bereavement) for a limited period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- No explanation has been given by the parent
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation
- The pupil is staying at home to look after the house/wait for a delivery
- The pupil is shopping during school hours
- The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday

### **APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the Attendance staff will monitor his/her attendance before entering the appropriate code on the register.

### **REFERRAL TO THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER**

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified period or if a pupil's attendance is causing concern, the matter will be discussed with the EWO and guidance sought.

### **LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for morning registration at 8.50am every day. It is disruptive to their own learning, and that of others in the class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be marked late. A pupil who is persistently late will be dealt with according to the Behaviour and Discipline Policy. The Associate SLT responsible for Attendance will be informed if a pattern emerges and action will be taken. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the EWO.

Pupils who arrive late for school after the register closes, must sign in with Student Services. For health and safety reasons, it is important that the school knows who is in the building, therefore it is vital that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure. Similarly it is important that pupils leaving the premises (eg for a medical appointment), on returning to school later in the day sign in and/or out with Student Services. (If the Student Services office is unavailable for any reason, pupils need to sign in and/or out at the Main Office.)

### **FIRST DAY ABSENCE**

The Attendance staff are responsible for maintaining a first day response system called 'Keep Kids Safe'. The system sends messages to parents and guardians of absent pupils if the school has not been informed of the absence. Parents should contact the school using the dedicated Pupil Absence telephone line or text line as soon as possible to inform the Attendance staff of any absence and by 9.30am.

### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

The Attendance staff are responsible for following up unexplained and unauthorised absences. These absences are dealt with up as follows:

- Parents and guardians are contacted by telephone on the second day of absence if no response has been given to Keep Kids Safe.
- If there is still no further response, parents are written to on a weekly basis. Records of letters sent are kept by the Attendance Officer.
- If pupils return from absence without a letter of explanation, parents and guardians are again contacted by telephone and / or letter.
- Referrals will be made to the EWO if reasons for absence have not been provided within two weeks.

### **MANAGING ILLNESS THROUGH THE SCHOOL DAY**

- If a pupil is unwell, he or she should report to Main Office.
- If a pupil has an accident, they should report to the Main Office for their condition to be assessed. If necessary, parents will be informed for the pupil to be collected from Reception: this decision must be made by the appropriate First Aider.
- Pupils are not allowed to make their way home, but must be collected by an appropriate adult.
- Parents will still be required to write to the school with regards to the reason as for their child's absence.
- In exceptional circumstances, emergency services may be contacted if there is any delay in the parents arrival at school or in the interests of the welfare of the child, when parents will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

### **POST REGISTRATION TRUANCY**

Post registration truancy occurs when a pupil does not attend a lesson and has registered for the previous session. All class teachers should enter attendance on Lesson Monitor promptly at the beginning of every lesson. If a pupil has been marked present in the previous session but is absent without explanation the Attendance staff should be informed. If the pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will attempt to contact his/her parents immediately. In certain instances, the

Police will also be contacted. The Behaviour Support Team will issue an appropriate sanction for truancy e.g. detention and enter it onto the SIMS system.

## **TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS**

### **Agreed by Education legal department June 2014**

The Local Authority is fully supportive of the national drive to raise school attendance, recognising the crucial link between attendance and attainment. It is already clear from attendance data to date that the strategy of actively discouraging the taking of holidays in term time has resulted in a significant improvement in attendance across schools in the City and County of Swansea.

The Local Authority therefore intends to pursue this strategy as part of its drive to raise school attendance. Whilst individual requests will be considered, no absences due to holidays during term times will be authorised by the Headteacher, other than in exceptional circumstances. This means absences due to pupils being taken on holidays during term time will be recorded as 'unauthorised.'

## **PENALTY NOTICES**

The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice)(Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LA's) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include penalty notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absences can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's regular non-attendance at school / educational provision. This will take effect from January 2015.

The school adheres to the code of conduct for penalty notices as issued by ERW and agreed by the Local Authority, and therefore may request the local authority to issue a penalty notice in certain cases.

Penalty notices can be issued for the following reasons:

When a pupil has a minimum of 10 sessions or 5 school days lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and bringing the overall school attendance to below 90% in the school year to date.

10 sessions or 5 school days lost due to holidays in term-time if the absence takes the whole school attendance to below 90% in the current school year to date.

10 sessions of persistent lateness after the register has closed in a term bringing the attendance to below 90% in the current school year to date, or a combination of the above.

## **STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ATTENDANCE:**

Ms K Smith	SLT responsible for Attendance
Mrs EJ Gwyther	Attendance Manager
Mrs K North	Attendance Officer
Mrs Y Stewart	Student Services
Mr S Richards	Education Welfare Officer
Heads of Year	Duties in line with Attendance Framework
Form tutors	Ensure statutory morning registration is recorded accurately by 9.10am daily. Duties in line with Attendance Framework
Class teachers	Ensure electronic registers are marked accurately and swiftly each lesson. Ensure statutory afternoon registration is completed.

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Copies of this policy are available on our website, in policy folders on the school network and can be made available on request.

Date: January 2015

Reviewed: January 2017

Reviewed: February 2019

Policy Review Date: February 2021