

# BISHOP ULLATHORNE CATHOLIC SCHOOL



# Attendance Policy 2023

Review Date Summer 2024

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to be an active Christian community of love and service, where all feel they belong and are valued.

We will help each other to recognise the gift of God within us, to search for excellence and foster the development of our true self.

### 1. Principles

The Governors and staff of Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality to personal character development, achievement in education and success in employment. As our role is to assist parents who are the primary educators of their children, we aim to work together with parents and carers to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Our Attendance Policy is framed within the values of our Mission Statement.

### 2. Rights, Responsibilities and Roles

#### **Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School:**

- Bishop Ullathorne staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- We will work closely with parents & carers to encourage and reward good attendance and to investigate promptly if absenteeism or lateness give cause for concern.
- We will keep parents and carers fully informed of their child's attendance and punctuality and contact parents on the first day of absence if their child is absent from school without explanation.
- We will work closely with all relevant agencies to safeguard children and ensure good attendance.
- We will act promptly when a child's whereabouts is unknown by following the Local Authority's protocol for Children Missing from Education.

#### **Key Personnel**

<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mr Billings is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances'
<b>SLT Link:</b>	Mrs Boyle is the SLT link for attendance
<b>Education Welfare officer:</b>	Mrs Linda Moore is the school Education Welfare Officer.
<b>Key Stage Leaders:</b>	Your child's Key Stage Leader should be the first point of contact for any attendance concerns

#### **Our Parents/ Carers:**

Parents/ carers are required by law to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance. The Governing Body has endorsed the Local Authority use of parenting contracts and penalty notices for parents of persistent truants.

- Parents/ carers will ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped, dressed in full school uniform and in a fit condition to concentrate on their learning.
- Parents/ carers will inform the school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the first morning of any absence, and in advance if possible. We may require this to be confirmed in writing when a student returns to school.

- Parents/ carers will normally avoid making medical appointments during school hours. This includes opticians, dentist, doctors and orthodontist appointments.
- On the rare occasions when an appointment in school hours is unavoidable, parents/ carers will make arrangements to collect their child from school and return them to class as soon as possible.
- Parents/ carers will avoid arranging family holidays during term time.
- Requests for leave of absence will be made two weeks in advance, or more where possible, using the form available from the school gatehouse.

#### **Students:**

- Students will ensure that they attend form tutor time and lessons regularly and on time.
- Students who arrive after the register has closed will sign in at student reception, giving a reason for their lateness.
- Students will not leave the school site without permission.
- Students will be regularly updated on their attendance and strive to have excellent school attendance and punctuality.

### **3. Registration**

It is a legal requirement to keep accurate registers of students' attendance.

- The official school day begins with a register taken during form tutor time at 8.40am
- A register will also be taken at the start of every lesson as part of our safe guarding policy.
- The afternoon session begins at 12.30pm that is period 4.

**Lateness to form period/ lesson.** Any student arriving after the register has been taken will be deemed late and registered with an **L** code. If a student is late for form tutor registration twice in a week they will receive a break time detention. A break time detention will be automatically given to a student who arrives in school after 8.50am. *(This is waived if the regular school bus on which they travel is late, and other legitimate reasons such as medical appointments etc).* Subject Leaders must make arrangements within their department to deal with lateness to lesson.

**The school gates are closed at 8.40am.** Should a student arrive in school after this time he/she should enter the school premises through the gatehouse, sign in and provide an explanation for their lateness.

### **4. Authorised/ Unauthorised Absence**

It is the role of our school to decide whether an absence is to be authorised. Parents and carers must inform school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the first morning of the absence. We may require this to be confirmed in writing when a student returns. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered authorises the absence.

#### **Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Sickness;
- unavoidable medical/ dental appointments (wherever possible these should be made outside of school hours);
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement; or a catastrophic event at home.

#### **Absence from school will not be authorised for:**

- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents / carers;

- minding the house, birthdays, shopping or any other activity that should not be undertaken if they prevent students from attending school.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

Any request for absence in advance must be made using the 'Request for absence during school term' form (Appendix 1) and should explain fully the reasons for requesting the absence. We appreciate that on very rare occasions such absences are appropriate. The law allows schools to authorise, in exceptional circumstances.

Decisions on authorising absence requests will be made by the Headteacher, taking the following consideration:

- the amount of time requested;
- age of the child;
- proximity of examinations and other assessed components of public examinations;
- previous attendance & punctuality record;
- the student's educational needs;
- the student's ability to catch up with any missed work;
- general welfare of the child;
- purpose of the leave requested;
- circumstances of the request;
- when the request was made;
- National and Local guidance on the authorisation of absence;
- information provided by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) or representatives of any other agencies.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response giving the reason for the decision. Letters approving requests will state the expected date of return and that parents/ carers will contact the school if anything delays the student's return. If a student fails to return when expected, we will inform the relevant authorities. Letters refusing requests will explain the reason and that ignoring the refusal will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded, which may in turn lead to a penalty notice being served.

### **Approved Educational Activities**

There are a number of activities that form a valuable part of a student's education yet take place off the school campus. These include courses activities run by other providers where participation by students from Bishop Ullathorne has been arranged by the school for instance, sporting activities, retreats and work experience which takes place within the legislative framework.

Requests to take part in activities arranged by others, will only be approved if we believe that the activity satisfies the regulatory requirements including supervision of the activity by someone authorised to do so by the school. Consideration of such requests will include:

- the nature of the activity;
- the benefits to the student;
- the effect on the student's education;
- the amount of time requested; and
- the timing of the activity.

## 5. Procedures for Following up Absence/Lateness

All unexplained absences will be followed up on the first date by a Pastoral Support Manager (PSM) and/ or the Attendance Clerk by telephone call and/ or text message. Should a student be absent for more than two consecutive days without an explanation, the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will visit the home address. If a student has a poor attendance record the EWO may visit the home address on the first day of absence.

The school may require written confirmation of the reason for a student's absence, especially where their attendance is a cause for concern. Form tutors will collect written explanations from returning students and pass these to the Pastoral Support Manager (PSM).

1. Students who are late to school will sign into the gatehouse and be issued a late to school slip. They will be placed in a breaktime detention with their key stage leader and or pastoral support manager. Students who are classed as persistently late to school.
2. **Two or more lates** in a week will be placed in **an after school detention on a Friday night**. This detention will last for one hour. The student will also be spoken to by their Pastoral Support Manager about the issues and work with them to resolve them.
3. Students who continue to be classed as persistently late will complete after school detention and meet with the key stage leader and parents. The student will also be spoken to by their Key Stage Leader about the issues and work with them to resolve them.
4. Students who continue to be classed as persistently late and have been seen by their key Stage Leader will have a parental meeting with a member of SLT and the Education welfare officer. A punctuality contract will be created.
5. Students who continue to be classed as persistently late and have been seen a member of the senior leadership team will asked to attend a governor's panel. This will take place one month after step 4.

All notes or emails from parents/ carers regarding a student's absence will be stored on their child's file after they have been initialled (and dated) by the form tutor and kept for six months.

Should a written explanation not be provided by parents/ carers when requested, then the KSL will write to the parents. When a student is persistently late or absent without good reason and the school's efforts to effect improvement have been unsuccessful, we will refer the matter to EWO. Attendance below 95% is a cause for concern and action will be taken to promote better attendance patterns. Such action will be scaled according to the level of poor attendance/ punctuality developing. Attendance below 90% or persistent patterns of lateness will trigger legal proceedings as appropriate.

## 6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

The curriculum is monitored and developed to meet the needs of all students. A variety of teaching & learning strategies are used to engage and enthuse different groups of students. Student voice feedback is used in the planning and evaluation of the curriculum and teaching and learning. Attendance statistics are collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Good attendance is monitored and rewarded through weekly and termly form tutor group competitions. Students with 100% attendance receive particular praise and reward, as do those who have responded to intervention and made good progress. Parents/ carers are kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality. Students take part in sessions, led by their form tutor, aimed at developing understanding of the importance of attendance. They are regularly encouraged by form tutors to monitor their own attendance. A range of strategies targeted at low attending groups is used by form tutors, PSMs and KSL throughout the year promote good attendance and punctuality.

Frequent attendance analysis reports will be produced by the Assistant Headteacher leading on attendance which outlines progress, trends and areas for concern using comparative data.

Visits to partner primary schools will be made in order to ensure the fullest support for all students during secondary transfer and in order to help identify any students who may need special help. Regular, structured meetings will be held with the school's EWO in order to identify and support those students whose attendance/ punctuality is a source of concern.

Students whose attendance falls beneath 90% will be set targets for improvement and referred to the EWO. In the case of Looked After children, the threshold shall be 95% attendance. These targets will be regularly reviewed by the Pastoral Support Managers.

Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually-tailored programme, constructed in consultation with parents/ carers, the Education Welfare Officer, Key stage Leaders, Pastoral Support Managers and SENDCo as appropriate.

When deemed to be appropriate, Penalty Notices will be used as a strategy to change attendance patterns.

## **7. Collection of Attendance Data**

Each week summary attendance data for each form tutor group will be collected in order to inform the rewards system and assess on-going performance. Each week punctuality data for late students will be collated and parents informed where appropriate (see Section 5).

This data will be analysed by KSL/ PSMs to identify trends and patterns and linking attendance with attainment. Each half term the following data will be collected and analysed in order to assess performance and trends:

- whole school and year group attendance rates;
- numbers and proportion of persistent absentee students (less than 80% attendance) and students at risk from becoming persistent absentees (less than 90% attendance);
- attendance rates for particular student groups (gender, ethnicity, SEN, Looked After children).

Attendance data will be used to set a range of attendance targets for the whole school, for identified cohorts and, where appropriate, for individual students. This will be monitored through the pastoral RAP and SEF process.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The operation and impact of this policy will be monitored by the SLT member who line manages Attendance.

## Persistent lateness to school

### Step 1

Students who are late to school will sign into the gatehouse and be issued a late to school slip. They will be placed in a breaktime detention with their key stage leader and or pastoral support manager

### Step 2

Students who are classed as persistently late to school. Two or more lates in a week will be placed in an after school detention on a Friday night. This detention will last for one hour. The student will also be spoken to by their Pastoral Support Manager about the issues and work with them to resolve them.

### Step 3

Students who continue to be classed as persistently late will complete step 2 consequences and meet with the key stage leader and parents. This will take place a month after the first step 2 action. The student will also be spoken to by their Key Stage Leader about the issues and work with them to resolve them.

### Step 4

Students who continue to be classed as persistently late and have been seen by their key Stage Leader will have a parental meeting with a member of SLT and the Education welfare officer. This will take place one month after step 3. A punctuality contract will be created.

### Step 5

Students who continue to be classed as persistently late and have been seen a member of the senior leadership team will be asked to attend a governor's panel. This will take place one month after step 4