



**Bishop  
Hogarth**

Catholic Education Trust

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willington



<b>Document Management:</b>	
Date Policy Approved:	9 November 2016
Date Policy Reviewed:	June 2018
Next Review Date:	June 2021
Version:	2.0
Approving Body:	Board of Directors

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## 1. Statement of Intent

Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, is committed to providing a full and effective education for all its students to ensure they achieve their potential in all that they do.

We recognise the importance of good school attendance and research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willington will support students to ensure they access the best education that we can offer and will work in partnership with parents/carers in ensuring they are aware of their legal responsibilities regarding their child's education and support their child to achieve their maximum possible attendance, ensuring any problems are identified and acted on promptly.

Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and therefore a priority for the Academy.

## 2. Statutory Guidance

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- Keeping children safe in education
- Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance

## 3. Expectations

A student's progress is severely hampered if they do not regularly attend school.

<b>98-100%</b>	<b>Expected</b>
<b>95-97%</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Below 95%</b>	<b>A cause for concern</b>
<b>Below 90%</b>	<b>A serious cause for concern</b>

To illustrate:

- 90% attendance is an average of one day out of school per fortnight over a school year.
- 90% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is half a school year missed.
- 80% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is the same as one whole school year missed.

We expect that all students will:

- attend school regularly
- arrive on time, appropriately dressed in school uniform and prepared for the school day
- through our effective guidance system, report any problems which could impact on their attendance or punctuality
- follow school rules

We expect all parents to:

- ensure their child attends school every day and on time
- ensure that their child arrives to school wearing school uniform with the correct equipment fully prepared for the school day
- provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers
- inform school in confidence of any problem which might impact on their child's attendance or punctuality
- be aware that it is their responsibility to inform school of the reason for their child's absence. They should contact school on the first day of absence before 9.00 am when their child is unable to attend
- provide medical evidence if requested by school
- arrange all holidays during the thirteen weeks of school holidays and not during term time
- support our school's procedures in promoting outstanding attendance for all and attend appropriate meetings in school to discuss their child's attendance
- work in partnership with the school, emphasising to their children the importance of respecting policies and procedures

Parents/carers can expect that school will:

- provide the highest quality of education
- promote and encourage excellent attendance and punctuality
- raise awareness of the importance of excellent attendance with parents, around school and within the local community
- maintain an effective electronic registration system
- regularly monitor attendance and use data to identify emerging patterns of absence
- closely monitor the attendance of identified vulnerable groups of students
- address the causes of non-attendance
- work with parents, the Local Authority, schools across the Trust and external agencies to improve attendance
- make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/carer when a child fails to attend school and the school has not been notified of the reason for the absence
- provide work during a period of authorised absence, or on a student's return
- support students upon return to school after a period of absence
- include attendance data in appropriate school reports
- act promptly and confidentially when notified of a problem which could impact on attendance or punctuality
- comply with safeguarding regulations

Governors will:

- attend Attendance Case Conferences when required
- agree attendance targets
- monitor and evaluate attendance statistics Governors will set areas for improvement to establish and maintain the best levels of attendance for all students. To assist with this, the Head Teacher will report to Governors termly on attendance related issues.
- identify a designated Governor for Attendance.

#### **4. Recognition of Good and Improved Attendance**

5. Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willington recognises the importance of praise and reward for both good and improved attendance. All students are encouraged to realise the importance of good attendance and punctuality to enable them to achieve their full potential at school and their life goals. There is a monitoring system which incorporates rewards and consequences for students and they must have excellent attendance and punctuality to be considered to take part in school trips etc.

#### **6. Absence**

When a student has had a lengthy absence from their education, whether authorised or unauthorised appropriate support will be given to help him/her catch up on any work that they have missed.

Secondary students will attend a meeting with a member of staff to discuss the absence and work that they have missed.

The Academy recognises that occasionally a student may be absent due to a medical condition, illness and/or ongoing additional needs. The Academy has an excellent pastoral and SEN support system and regular meetings ensure that these students are provided with the appropriate targeted support to minimise the disruption to their education.

##### **Authorised**

Authorised absence means that the Academy has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification.

Only the Head Teacher can approve absence, not parents/carers. The school is not obliged to accept a parental note or other form of notification as a valid reason for absence and further evidence may be requested. If, after investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered, or where no explanation is given, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Should a student feel unwell in school, the student must follow the Academy's procedure and inform the relevant member of staff if they feel too poorly to remain in school. If appropriate, school will call home to notify parents/carers and to inform them if the child needs to be collected.

##### **Unauthorised**

Unauthorised absence is when the Academy is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Where parents condone unjustified absence the Academy will commence attendance procedures at an early stage and this may lead to a referral to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice Fine or Statutory Procedures for non-school attendance.

To avoid unauthorised absence it is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform school of the reason for their child's absence. Contact should be made with the school on the first day of absence before 9.00 am when a child is unable to attend. If the academy does not receive notification the academy operates a first-day response as part of school attendance and safeguarding procedures. A text message or phone call will be made to parent/carers and a home visit may be made at the discretion of the school to ascertain the whereabouts of a student who has failed to attend. If no reason is provided for a student's absence the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

## **7. Admission Registers**

The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

## **8. Expected First Day of Attendance**

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly.

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year – for example pupils who are registered at a secondary school at the start of Year 7 - unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided.

## **9. Pupils Moving to a New Address and/or School**

Where the parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, schools must record in the admission register:

- (a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live,
- (b) the new address, and
- (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, schools must record in the admission register:

- (a) the name of the other school, and
- (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

## 10. Children at Risk of Missing Education

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must<sup>9</sup> provide the local authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

All schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

## 11. Marking of Registers – Academies must follow Government Guidelines:

[School Attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#)

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an accurate attendance register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session to mark students present or absent. This is also part of the Safeguarding Procedures within all schools.

There is also a requirement that attendance records must show whether an absence of a student of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willington has a SIM's computerised registration system in place which incorporates a lesson monitor. Taking of registers is an integral part of the school day, as was intended by the law and particular attention is paid to accurate use of codes, falsification of attendance registers may lead to disciplinary action.

Registers in the academies will be checked on a termly basis to ensure the correct codes are entered, this will be completed by Lynn Hunter (Vice Principal, Carmel College) and Andrea Mortimer, Parent Support & Attendance Lead.

## REGISTER CODES

All absent codes highlighted in red will impact on students attendance percentage

/	Morning Registration	Present	
\	Afternoon Registration	Present	
L	Late arrival before the close of register	Present	
U	Late arrival after the close of register	Unauthorised	
B	Off-site Educational Activity  Schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils who are educated off site.	Authorised	Only to be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by school. The B code certifies the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for unsupervised activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.
C	Leave of absence authorised by school	Authorised	To be used for exceptional circumstances that warrant an authorised leave of absence.
D	Dual Registered – attending another educational establishment	This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.	Examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis or when a pupil is on a ‘managed move’ to another school.
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised	Alternative provision must be arranged for an excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Once alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.
G	Holiday not authorised by school or in excess of the period determined by the Head Teacher	Unauthorised	To be used when leave of absence is declined or when no application has been made.
H	Holiday authorised by school	Authorised	Head Teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Applications must be made in advance.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	Authorised	
J	Attending an interview with prospective employers or another educational establishment.	Authorised	
M	Medical or Dental Appointment	Authorised	
N	Reason for absence not provided	Unauthorised	Should be followed up using school’s first day response to absence. This code should not be left on a pupil’s attendance record indefinitely (no more than 2 weeks). Once the reason is established appropriate code should be used.
O	Absent from school	Unauthorised	
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity	Authorised	To be used to record sessions when pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by school and supervised by someone authorised by school.
R	Religious Observation	Authorised	School must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance.

S	Study Leave	Authorised	Only to be recorded sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations.
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence	Authorised	To be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school. Whilst travelling if the pupil attends an alternate educational provision appropriate code should be used (D) – dual registration.
V	Education Trip or Visit	Authorised	To be used for any educational trips or visits, including residential.
W	Work Experience	Authorised	To be used for work experience pupils. School should ensure placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Absence should be recorded using the relevant code.
Admin Codes		X Y Z #	Not required in school Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances Pupil not on admission register Planned whole or partial school closure (half terms, bank holidays, up to 5 PD days.

## 12. Medical Appointments

The Academy recognises that occasionally medical appointments during the school day are unavoidable. However, students are expected to return to school immediately following an appointment and medical evidence may be requested. The vast majority of medical appointments do not require a full day, or even a full session of absence. In line with safeguarding regulations, students are required to sign in and out of school when they arrive or leave during the school day.

## 13. Requests for absence in term-time

Permission from the Head Teacher must be sought for all absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence form' ([Template 8](#)) must be completed in advance of the absence (available from the school office). Only the Head Teacher can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. ([Template 9](#) or [Template 10](#))

Under current regulations, schools cannot authorise any holidays taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. School will require evidence of exceptional circumstances, which should be attached to the 'request for leave of absence form' and the judgement about what is exceptional will be made by the Head Teacher.

Taking a holiday in term may lead to:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty of up to **£120** , failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Teesside Magistrates Court
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment**.

Holidays taken in term time can have a very negative impact on a child's education, as well as school's attendance statistics and examination results. Research has shown that a 10% drop in attendance (equivalent to 19 ½ days in a school year) can mean a one grade drop at GCSE.



For absences that are due to sporting or other educational activities which have not been organised by school, evidence of the event must accompany the 'request for leave of absence' form.

### **13. Punctuality**

Punctuality is extremely important. All students are required to arrive punctually for registration.

If a student arrives for school after the close of registration at 9.30 am/20 minutes after the start of the school day, the session can be recorded as 'U' mark on the registration certificate which is an unauthorised absence and will impact on their overall attendance.

We also expect students to arrive punctually to lessons. Students who arrive late to lessons not only affect their own learning but also seriously disrupt the learning of others in the class. The academy has strict disciplinary procedures for dealing with persistent lateness and rewards for excellent punctuality.

### **14. Truancy**

When the Academy become aware that a student is truanting, whether it is internal or external truancy, parents/carers may be contacted and the truancy will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

### **15. Persistent Absenteeism**

The Department for Education deems that if a student's attendance drops below 90% they become known as a Persistent Absentee, regardless of the reason for the absence and irrespective of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and parent/carer's full support and co-operation is required to avoid this.

At Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willington, all absence is monitored thoroughly and any case seen to have reached the Persistent Absence level or becoming at risk of reaching it is given priority. Continued persistent absence may lead to a referral to the Local Authority for statutory procedures.

### **16. Penalty Notice Fines**

Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is both a legal requirement (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) and essential for students to maximise the opportunities available to them to reach their full potential. It is parent(s)/carers responsibility to ensure their child/ren receive(s) efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

Education-related penalty notices were introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 which amended section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to allow parents to be issued with a penalty where they failed to ensure their child of compulsory school age (5-16) and school registered, regular attendance.

Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Willington will consider a referral to the Local Authority for Penalty Notice Fines for non school attendance if all other intervention has failed and no valid reasons for absence have been provided.

## **17. Attendance Procedures**

Thorough and targeted attendance procedures are followed throughout the Trust and any concerns or issues that may be impacting on attendance are addressed, this may include:

1:1 Discussion with pupil

Internal Centre Support within Academies

Language Barrier - Interpreter

Early Help Assessment

Referral to targeted support agencies

Attendance Focus Group/Attendance Panel

Part Time Timetable Provision – short measured timescale

Local Authority Intervention

A consistent approach to correspondence and supporting documentation to help track and review improvement in attendance are utilised by the Trust these include:

- Template 1 - Initial Letter at Risk of Persistent Absentee Classification
- Template 2 - Formal Review Date Letter & Medical Evidence Request
- Template 3 - Improvement Recognition Letter
- Template 4 - Meeting Invitation Letter
- Template 5 - Individual Attendance Improvement Plan
- Template 6 - Attendance Meeting Minutes
- Template 7 - Did not attend Meeting Letter
- Template 8 - Leave of Absence Request Form
- Template 9 - Authorised Holiday Letter
- Template 10 - Unauthorised Holiday Letter
- Template 11 - Punctuality Concern Letter

## **18. Resources**

Holiday Fact Sheet

Days off School add Up to Lost Learning

Attendance Booklet - Attend Today Achieve Tomorrow

Every Minute Counts

**Online Agency Information:**

[Guidance On Infection Control In Schools – Health Protection Agency](#)

[Citizens Advice](#)

[NHS - Coping with Bereavement](#)

[Children and Family Support - Stockton Borough Council](#)

[Families Information Team - Darlington Borough Council](#)

[Eastern Ravens - Stockton on Tees Young Carers](#)

[DISC - Darlington Young Carers](#)

[SWAN - Stockton Welfare Advice Network](#)

[Government - School Attendance & Absence](#)

[Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance 2016](#)

# ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION

Throughout Process Consider & Engage Support Required by Student/Family

