

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2023-24

“Aim high – live life to the full”

Written By	Christine Woodhouse/Ann McKenna/Liverpool L.A.
Ratified by Governors	Autumn 2023
Date Reviewed	Autumn 2023
Date for review	September 2024
Signed Chair of Governors	<i>T Gundersen</i>
Signed Headteacher	<i>C Davey</i>

Our Attendance Team

Mrs Christine Woodhouse - Deputy Headteacher and Designated Attendance Lead (DAL)

Mrs Ann McKenna - Learning Mentor/Attendance Lead

Miss Kathi Gregory- Family Liaison Officer

Mrs Geraldine O'Connell- Admin Assistant

Mrs Jane Griffin- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Mr Chris Davey- Headteacher / Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Miss Carol Deering - Local Authority Pupil Attendance and Education Welfare Officers, telephone number (office) 0151 233 3916 (mobile) 07739703926

This is a successful and happy school and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an ethos and culture that enables and encourages all members of our school community to reach out for excellence, as stated in our school motto '***Aim high- live life to the full.***'

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education and reach their full potential, it is vital that they have a high level of attendance and that they arrive at school, on time, ready to learn, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that everyone strives for all children to, at the very least, meet our school target of **97%** for attendance. This Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

1.0 Introduction

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School recognises the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. The aim of this policy is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School to support learning and development.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. ***As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.***

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School believes Teachers, Parents, Carers, Pupils and all members of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring pupils attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

2.0 Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Provide support, advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

2.1 Promoting regular Attendance at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School:

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils.

To help us all focus on this, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to improve punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes our school and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parents/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, weekly texts, half termly attendance reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

3.0 Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

3.1 Expectations of Parent/Carer

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours.
- Contact school as soon as possible before 8:50 a.m. on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond, to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact a member of the Attendance team if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of two emergency contact details be provided)
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays. Leave of Absence Forms can be requested from the school reception.

3.2 If a pupil is absent we will

- Telephone and/or text the parent/carers on the first day of absence, if we have not heard from them by 9:10 a.m.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised a member of school staff will conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carers will be invited to meet the Attendance Team.
- If absences persist the Attendance Team will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

4.0 Understanding types of Absence

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School has to record every absence that a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by calling the school on the first day of absence and in writing on the pupil's return.

4.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays or to look after siblings
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School can issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 schools days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

4.3 Persistent Absence

- Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the School Office in the first instance.

4.4 Severe Absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of school are classified as being severely absent by the Department of Education (DfE). This cohort of pupils are a priority group for Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School and additional support may be required from the local authority and partner agencies to support your child improving their attendance. It is essential that parents/carers work in partnership with the school and its partners, to ensure their child receives the support they require to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from attending school.

5.0 Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning. Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

6.0 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- The Education Welfare Officer – provides support for parents/carers and advice on problems relating to attendance and encourages good communications between home and school.
- The EWO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists, the EWO will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

7.0 Leave of absence in Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents/ carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/Carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

8.0 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons. It can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence.

8.1 How we manage lateness

Children should arrive at school between 8:40 a.m. and 8:55 a.m. Gates will be locked at 8:55 a.m. Registers are taken at 8:55 a.m. (8:45 a.m. for Littlebuds and Nursery) and pupils receive a late mark if they are not in their class by that time.

- If a pupil arrives late to school parents/carers will receive a text message to inform them of their child's late arrival.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice.
- If a parent/carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the Attendance Team who will offer support to resolve the problem.

9.0 People Responsible for Attendance Matters at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support therefore is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success.

10 Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register.
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

Parents' of a child who is leaving our school must:

- Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *Child Missing in Education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance

Whole School Approach

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on school site between 8:40 a.m. and 8:55a.m. (8:45 a.m. – Little Buds and Nursery). • Be in class on time for registration at 8:55 a.m. • Ensure all necessary equipment is brought to school -e.g.PE kit (parents of younger pupils).
	Parents/ Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure pupils are prepared for school physically and mentally and that they have the necessary equipment. • Ensure that pupils' attendance is at least at the expected standard of 97%. • Inform school of their child's absence by 8:50 a.m. and provide medical evidence when necessary. • Ensure that pupils arrive at school on time. • Book holidays out of term time.
	Class Teacher/ Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers are completed on SIMS each day on time and sent to the main office by 9:10 a.m. • Ensure attendance has a high profile in class. • Discuss absence with pupils returning to school. • Plan, prepare and deliver catch-up work for returning child. • Welcome all pupils into class, including long-term and short-term absentees and children who are late. • Inform Admin of any absence related DoJo messages. • Pass any copies of children's appointments to Admin or ask parents to call in at the Admin Office. • Afternoon registers are completed on SIMS as soon as the session begins. • Chase up any children that are not in p.m. who were in a.m. by ringing Admin.
	Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure attendance has a high profile. • Discuss absence with pupils returning to school. • Welcoming long-term absentees back into the class. • Support returning pupils with flexible intervention as directed.
	Achievement Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure 'Flexible Intervention' takes place. • Achievement leaders discuss with class teachers identified pupils of concern regarding specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required e.g. Flexible Intervention.
	SENDCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Attendance Team when necessary to discuss SEND children with Attendance/Punctuality concerns. • Ensure that Attendance is always discussed when meeting with parents/carers of pupils not meeting expected target of 97% and sign post to Attendance Team for support.
	Family Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. • Phone call contact with pupils/parents/carers. • Home visits to those where no reason for absence is given. • Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff and DAL. • Work as part of the attendance team.
	Attendance/Nurture Team/Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log on SIMS, parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences. Record absences, identify pupils who are absent from school without reason (before 9:10 a.m.) and follow school procedures. • Ensuring staff have completed a.m./p.m. registers • Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the register via SIMS. • Ensure all Late arriving pupils are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to SIMS • Text and/or telephone parent/carers who have failed to contact regarding their child's absence and also pupils who arrive late. • First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message/phone call has been returned. • SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required. • Supporting staff with registration queries, support the interventions of the class teachers. • Logging attendance of all pupils going out /in school for medical, dental or visits • Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure a.m. and p.m. registers are provided within set time parameters and pupils who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the First Day of Contact systems. • Daily Late process, log and send actions for relevant staff. • Daily Attendance/ PA report discussed with senior leader with responsibility for attendance (DAL). • Parents of specific, identified pupils called on first day of absence. • Daily late procedures followed. • Support with 'Wellbeing Breakfast Group'.
	EWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. • Phone call contact with pupils/parents/carers. • Home visits where no reason for absence is given. • Instigation of legal proceedings.

	Senior Leaders /Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Curriculum Leaders regarding support work with identified pupils.
--	---------------------------	---

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class Teachers/ Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all members of the class know the school target of 97% and their current attendance. Monitor/follow up identified pupil absence by contacting parents/carers where appropriate. Update information on class attendance display each week. Ensure pupils with a full week of attendance have a ticket in the raffle. Encourage a sense of pride and competition in winning the weekly attendance and having the largest total percentage. Carry out regular discussions with specific pupils to investigate attendance concerns. Use Attendance as a teaching tool when possible e.g. math's data, written arguments.
	SENDCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Attendance Team when necessary to discuss SEND pupils with Attendance/Punctuality concerns. Ensure that Attendance is written on all SEND paperwork and records.
	Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform EWO of pupil patterns of absence. Provide weekly pupil attendance figures for class teachers and pupil rewards. Provide class teachers with raffle tickets. Discuss punctuality issues with identified pupils and parents/carers. Provide weekly Punctuality data for class teacher and pupil rewards. Support, Support Challenge. Keep a running record of School Attendance data v LA Attendance data.
	Achievement Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee daily arrangements for help for pupils to catch up on missed work due to prolonged absence and/or specific absence.
	Senior Leaders / Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring/Tracking and ensuring accountability of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. Liaison with EWO, Pastoral Team, Achievement Leads and Curriculum Leaders regarding targeted support work with identified pupils.

	Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement. Use attendance data to identify and act on to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils. Monitor and track attendance/PA Action Plans.
	Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold Panel meetings for PA children. Inform SLT of pupil patterns of absence. Plan and lead 'Calendar Days' that impact on whole school attendance. Meet with 'Link Governor' for Attendance.
HALF TERMLY	Senior Leaders / Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement. Use attendance data to identify and take action to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils. Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy. Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents' evenings and reports. Monitor and track attendance/PA Action Plans. Liaise with EWO to share information and agree joint actions re action plans or other pupils causing concern.

TERMLY	Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All attendance actions to be brought to Achievement Team meeting. Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents' meetings and reports. Ensure that Attendance is on all Learning and Play Plans. Teachers discuss with their class what they will buy with their winnings, if their class wins the pot of money.
	Achievement Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of pupils who are regularly absent and actions that have been taken by the class teacher should be discussed at every achievement team meeting and recorded on the appropriate forms. Discuss attendance concerns and actions at Achievement Lead Meeting. Meet with Link Governor
	Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare cheques for Infant/Junior Attendance winners. Draw Attendance raffle and arrange for voucher to be given to the winning pupil.
	Senior Leaders / Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all pupils both in school and those at off-site provision. Review notes from Teacher/Parents meetings. School Attendance Review alongside the EWO. Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, for plans to raise attendance. Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively. Report to SLT on attendance matters. Ensure school prospectus, parent/carers welcome booklet all promote Attendance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors. Prepare data for Full Governing Body Meeting.

Annually	Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take note of their new class and identify and plan for pupils in class who are historical PAs. During transition meetings, discuss progress and attitudes and behaviour of those children who are PAs. Discuss engagement of parents of those pupils in their class who are PAs.
	Achievement Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When possible, meet with Link Governor for Attendance to discuss data/actions and impact.
	SENDCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Attendance is discussed at Annual Review for those children below expected target of 97%.
	Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify calendar days that may impact on whole school attendance. Review action plan and create one for new academic year Review and update Attendance Policy, Child Friendly Policy, Rewards, Flow Chart and procedures, Parents Attendance Booklet and update Website. Draw up a list of Gold, Silver and Bronze Attenders, produce certificates and hand out for 'Prize Day'.
	Senior Leaders / Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratify Attendance policy. Agree reviewed Attendance Documentation.

“Aim high – live life to the full”

[Type here]