

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction

Good attendance is a prerequisite to learning and achievement. Regular attendance gives pupils the opportunity to take full advantage of all educational and development opportunities. Irregular attendance can undermine the educational process, routines and wellbeing it puts young people at an educational disadvantage and at a safeguarding risk.

We at St Benedict's work hard to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our students and therefore maintaining high attendance is central to ensuring these outcomes.

This policy is based upon current guidance and legislation from the DFE https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf and we will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

Aims

- To develop attitudes and behaviours in young people that enables them to play an active part in the adult world.
- To recognise the role that high levels of attendance have in securing high levels of progress.
- To develop a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality in pupils, parents and staff.
- To put in place and monitor procedures that will minimise poor attendance.
- Promote an effective working Partnership with the Local Authorities Educational and Welfare Officer.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Ensure the importance of good attendance and punctuality is promoted and policies made available to parents and staff.
- Review the attendance and punctuality policy annually.
- Take time at Governor Meetings to review and discuss attendance and punctuality and that targets for the year are being worked towards.
- Ensure the school is implementing and recording the collection of attendance and punctuality data.
- Use the data collected to help implement future plans and targets.

Leadership Team.

- Be active in the promotion of good attendance and punctuality to all stake holders, including the building of relationships with families.

- Ensure that the schools teaching and learning experiences engage students and therefore promote attendance.
- Ensure they are aware of how they should highlight and deal with any potential attendance/punctuality issues.
- Ensure they are up to date on Government legislation relating to attendance.
- Ensure the systems to record and report attendance and punctuality are in place.
- Appoint a senior leader to take responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and punctuality and they have sufficient time and resources to do the job.
- Report to governors termly on attendance and punctuality.
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help support families where there are difficulties in getting a child into school.
- Document the interventions that have been used to help support a child and family in improving attendance.

Attendance Lead with the support of the schools attendance officer

- Help contribute to raising achievement by improving attendance and punctuality.
- Oversee the schools attendance and punctuality procedures, ensuring that the twice daily official registers are accurately maintained.
- Monitor attendance identifying students of concern and implementing strategies to bring about improvement. Ensure that all interventions are well documented and the structures laid out in appendix 3.
- Make sure that parents understand the benefits to their child of high levels of attendance and are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities.
- Work with families where necessary to facilitate the return of students to school or to bring about improvements in attendance where it has been flagged up as irregular.
- Reduce levels of unauthorised absence persistent absence and poor punctuality using the procedures laid out in appendix 3 of this policy.
- Ensure staff are trained and have a full understanding of the importance of recording attendance data accurately and its impact on student outcomes and safety.

Teachers and support staff.

- Be active in their approach to the promotion of high levels of attendance including the formation of positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the teaching and learning experiences engage and therefore promote attendance.
- Ensure they are up to date in their knowledge of this policy and their statutory duties relating to the recording of registers these are to be taken at 8:55am and 13:40 any child arriving after the register is closed will be recorded as absent and will need to sign in at the main office.
- Staff will take registers at the beginning of every lesson to ensure the school can track the whereabouts of all students and thus safeguard them more effectively. Any sudden absences that occur throughout the day can then either be highlighted to the office by the class teacher or picked up by the attendance officer.

- Work with outside agencies where needed to support students who are struggling with regular attendance and punctuality.

Educational welfare officer.

- Have regular meetings with the schools attendance officer.
- Liaise with the school over concern about attendance and punctuality percentages.
- Follow up referrals made by the school by contacting the families concerned.
- Meet with families regarding issues around attendance and punctuality.
- Make home visits where necessary.
- Report back to the school any actions.

Parents and Carers.

- Engage with their children's learning taking an interest in what they have been doing thus promoting the value of a good education through events such as Parents evenings or consultations.
- The prime responsibility for ensuring a child receives full time education rests with the parents/carers (defined in 1966 Education Act). They should therefore ensure that their child attends regularly keeping requests for absence to a minimum. Any requests for term time absence must be done through the Head teacher.
- Parents are expected to notify the St Benedict's school on the first day of absence by phoning the schools office and either leaving a message of speaking to one of the staff.
- Provide a written note to school with the child following their return after an absence.
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspect of their child's school life.

Students.

- Understand the importance of high levels of attendance and good punctuality on ensuring they make excellent academic progress.
- Speak to their tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties which are likely to impact on their attendance.
- Students must follow the schools signing in procedures if they arrive late, and understand this is vital for the school to be able to fully safeguard the child.

Categorising Absences

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise absences and therefore all absences will be treated as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received by the school. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and the provision of a note does not automatically mean it will be authorised. Absences will be clearly recorded as authorised or unauthorised on the schools register.

Illness

Most illnesses are short term and parents should follow the schools procedure for reporting them. For prolonged illness the school may ask for medical evidence such as a Doctors letter.

Medical/Dental appointments

Every effort should be made to make these appointments out of school time. When this is not possible children should attend the school for as much of the day as is possible. Ideally, students will attend school in the morning and go to appointment after the Pm registration.

Authorised absences

for illness, religious observances, family bereavement, external exams, exclusions from school, these will be recorded using the correct code (Appendix 1) on the register.

Exclusion

Recorded as an authorised absence and the school will provide work via edulink learning platform.

Unauthorised absences

These are absences that the school does not deem reasonable and include; birthdays, shopping trips, daytrips and holidays not approved, looking after siblings or no reason is provided by the parent/carer. This type of absence can lead to the school requesting that the local authority uses sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Once a child has 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) a penalty notice referral will be made to the local authority as per the attendance guidelines see Appendix 3.

Family holiday and extended leave

These should be arranged outside term time. Any requests to remove a child during term time need to be made in advance to the Head teacher using the proforma found on the schools website and in Appendix 2. Decisions around approval will be based on individual circumstances of each case.

Collection & Analysis of Data

The attendance Leader will ensure that the attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reports to the Leadership Team, parents and Governing Body. The report should include a trajectory and the school target. This data will inform the practises implemented to bring about the improvement and improve engagement.

The monitoring will be at pupil, class and year level and will include information on specific groups such as disadvantaged, SEN, Looked after or previously looked after and also link to attainment.

Attendance returns will be made to the DfE within the time frame.

Managing and Improving Attendance

The school expects an attendance of 96% if attendance falls below 93% a letter will be sent to parents alerting them to this, if it falls below 91% a letter is sent requesting medical evidence of any further absences.

St Benedict's will ensure that attendance has a high profile through the Heads of Year in assemblies and Tutors in tutor time students will be made aware of the current levels of attendance and impacts on attainment. Access to Edulink will give them up to date information of their child's attendance.

St Benedict's operates a first day calling system. Parents will be phoned or texted on the first day of absence if no reason has been left with the school office. If parents cannot be reached a letter will be sent first class.

Where a child has been away for a period of time the school will support the child when they return to catch up on any work they have missed

Appendix 3 shows the interventions the school has in place if attendance drops below predetermined levels. Where there are emerging patterns the school will invite the parents in to discuss reasons and plans will be put in place to improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason.

If there continues to concerns around attendance after the specified period of time the school will refer to the Educational Welfare Officer Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require the school to inform the LA of a student who has been absent continuously for 10 school days or more or also for students who have worrying patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 consecutive days.

Lateness and Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive on time for all their classes; it is disruptive to their education and to that of others if they do not do so. If a student is late the teacher will record the late on the register along with the minutes.

Heads of Year will weekly monitor the minutes late and will use a range of strategies to improve student punctuality if required. This includes:

- Communication home raising awareness
- Punctuality Report Card with clearly defined consequences.
- 15 minutes accumulated minutes late resulting in lunchtime detention
- 30 minutes accumulated minutes late resulting in an early bird/after school detention.
- Any others

Conclusion

Levels of attendance of 96% or higher are necessary to help ensure positive outcomes for children. These include:

- Supports children in achieving maximum potential and the fulfilment this brings.
- Attendance at school helps to safeguard children.
- Helps to support student's emotional and social health development.
- Helps develop good life skills for when they enter the world of work.
- Membership of the school community helps to build confidence, gives a sense of belonging teaches them to contribute and be responsible for the well-being of others.
- Good attendance supports engagement with further education, employment or training in the future which in turn helps to support a fulfilling lifestyle.



St Benedict's
Catholic School
The Catholic Secondary School for West Suffolk

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Owned by: Mr P Taylor Assistant Headteacher)

Reviewed: September 2021

Date for Review September 2022

APPENDIX 1: Register Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity

APPENDIX 2: Request for leave of Absence in term time

At St Benedict's we place great importance on attendance. High attendance leads to high achievement. From 1 st September 2013 legislation prohibits any school from authorising leave of absence for holidays except in exceptional circumstances. This may include:

- Where it is company /organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time of the year (Documentary evidence will be required)
- Service personnel returning from or scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. (Evidence from a professional must be provided)
- Other factors that may result in the Headteacher consulting with the Local Authority for advice

This form requesting Leave of Absence should be completed by the parent/guardian and returned to the Headteacher at least two weeks prior to absence.

..... Name
of Child Date of Birth Tutor Group I, being the parent of the above child/ren request that you consider
my child/ren to be absent from school. Requested period of absence

from.....to..... Reason for the absence:

Absence can only be approved in exceptional circumstances

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.....
.....
.....

Signature of Parent /Guardian.....

Siblings

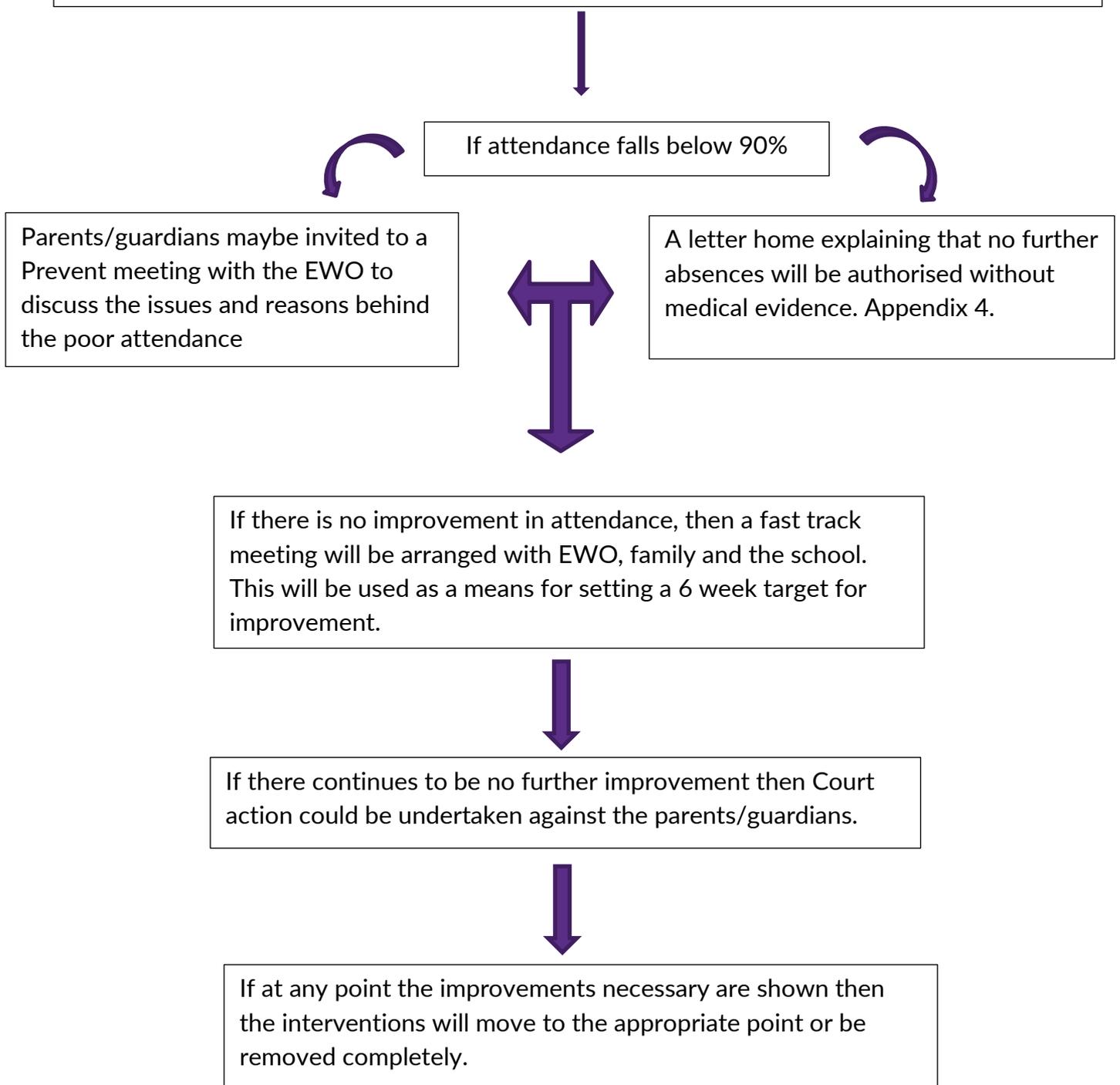
For our information only, please circle if you also have a child at one of our Pyramid schools: St Edmunds / St Louis Academy / St Felix / St Joseph's or other.

(please name).....

APPENDIX 3: Flow chart of procedures

Student's attendance will be monitored on an individual basis through the school year. Any absences/patterns that have been identified interventions by the school will be done case by case to improve student's attendance.

If attendance is causing concern. A Raising awareness letter will be sent home explaining the importance of maintaining high levels of attendance. Including how attendance impacts on learning time compared to the average student within their year group. Appendix 4



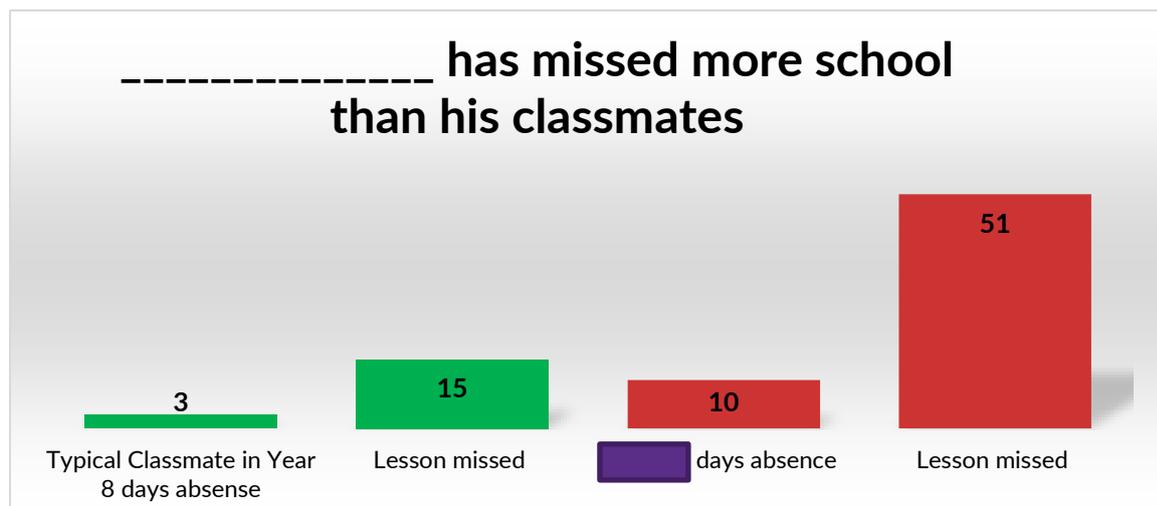
Attendance awareness letter

Dear

Good attendance and punctuality to school is essential for all students and a key priority of our school. It is our expectation that all our students strive for 100% attendance, arriving on time, every day, ready to learn

As you already know _____'s attendance is 79.38% for this year. The average attendance for _____'s year 8 classmates is 94%. As the table below shows below _____ has missed 10 days of school and 50 lessons compared to 3 days and 15 lessons of typical year 8 student.

Therefore it would be greatly appreciated if you can help _____ attend school for the rest of this term to limit any further loss of learning.



We will continue to monitor _____ attendance and hopefully this will improve by next term. Please do contact us if you have any concerns

Thank you, as ever, for your ongoing support of our school. It is most appreciated. Do let us know if there is anything we can help with at any time.

Yours sincerely