

ST BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Reviewed September 2015)

In law, parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive a suitable education by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Failure to comply with this positive duty can lead to prosecution. Pupils must stay in some form of education or training until they reach the age of 18. This can be full-time education, e.g. at a school or college, an apprenticeship or full-time employment (over 20 hours a week) combined with part-time education or training.

Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible in law for making sure that parents ensure their children are suitably educated. The Local Authority will seek to prosecute parents and carers where this positive duty is not discharged.

Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day: once at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. In their register schools are required to distinguish whether pupils are present, engaged in an approved educational activity or are absent. If a pupil arrives after the register is closed, they are marked with an unauthorised absence.

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is actually absent, schools have to indicate in their register whether the absence is authorised by the school or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (for example illness). Schools are entitled to request confirmation of any parental explanation for absence, for example medical confirmation from a doctor.

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a teacher or other representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. It is the schools decision to authorise/ unauthorise absences.

Registers should be marked in accordance with DfE regulations as outlined in the table below.

Table 1: A Table Indicating School Attendance Codes

Code	Code description	Meaning
/	Present	Present
B	Educated Off-site	Present
C	Not Required To Attend	No Statistical Meaning
D	Dual Registration	Present
E	Excluded	Absent
G	Family holiday (NOT AUTHORISED)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Holiday agreed in exceptional circumstances	Absent
I	Illness (pupil is off sick)	Absent
J	Interview	Absent
L	Late. Arrives after the beginning of registration.	Present

M	Medical/dental appt.	Absent
Code	Code description	Meaning
N	Absent	Absent
O	Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Present
R	Religious observance	Absent
S	Study leave	Absent
T	Traveller absence	Absent
U	Late (after registers closed)	Absent
V	Educational Visit/School enrichment activity	Present
W	Work Experience	Present
Y	Whole / Partial School Closure	Absent

Staff should not use any other code than those listed. Pupils are discouraged from making routine doctor or dentist appointments during the school day unless urgent.

Role Of The Tutor

At St Benedict's the monitoring of pupils' attendance is the responsibility of the Form Tutor working in partnership with the Head Of Upper/ Lower School and appointed attendance co-ordinator. Furthermore, the role of the Tutor is to monitor and encourage good attendance of their tutees. They will identify any absence quickly and look to obtain a written note from the parent detailing reasons for absence from their tutor group within a 24 hour period of the child returning to school. During the week Tutors should amend regularly previous registers on a daily basis as reasons for absence become clear. **Tutors are responsible for clearing all 'N's once the reason for absence has been established; this ensures that pupil's absence is coded correctly.** Any queries should be discussed with the Head of Pastoral Care/ Attendance Coordinator. Tutors have a pastoral responsibility to have an overview of the attendance and punctuality of each pupil in their Tutor Group and must focus on this regularly as part of their Tutor Period. They should reinforce the key messages about the importance of attendance with their Tutor Group, liaising with the Pastoral Team about pupils who fall below the 95% threshold. Tutors are asked to support the Pastoral Teams in meetings with parents wherever possible.

Subject teachers should maintain class registers which will monitor absence, concerns regarding a child's attendance should then be brought to the attention of the Form Tutor. All Tutors, together with the Head Of Upper/ Lower School and attendance co-ordinator, are responsible to the Head of Pastoral Care in the monitoring of their Tutor group's attendance. The Head of Pastoral Care will then, in conjunction with the Head Of Upper/ Lower School and attendance co-ordinator, follow up attendance concerns with the ESW/ ACE teams for both Warwickshire and Worcestershire as appropriate. The Headteacher will be kept informed of attendance concerns both on an individual and corporate basis.

Pupil Absence

Parents/guardians are requested to contact school before 8:45am on the first day of absence to report that their child will be absent on that day. The reason for absence will be relayed to form Tutors via SIMs using the message facility. If a Tutor is concerned with the attendance of a pupil they should raise this with the Head of Upper/Lower School and/or attendance co-ordinator. This may result in telephone contact with the pupil's home to establish reasons for absence and to assist with any possible problems. Reasons will be relayed to Tutors, Head Of Upper/ Lower School /attendance co-ordinator and Head of Pastoral Care accordingly.

Safeguarding

Following morning registration sessions reports are produced detailing which pupils are not present in school. Telephone calls (same day calling) are made to the parent(s) of those pupils for whom no notification of their absence has been received.

All absence must be covered by a letter of explanation from the pupil's parent/ legal guardian. Even though a pupil's parent/guardian telephones to explain absence, on the pupil's return to school a letter of explanation must be produced. If letters are not received the absence will be marked as unauthorised. A parental explanation does not, in itself justify authorisation. If for any reason there are concerning or frequent patterns of illness without a valid medical reason the School will inform parents by letter (refer to Appendices) that no further illness will be authorised.

Leave Of Absence

Leave of Absence

The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations **remove** references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers **may not grant any** leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

If a Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the timeframe set out in the notice, the Local Authority clearly state that the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996. Leave of absence requests should be officially applied for, by parents, two weeks in advance using the relevant LA forms obtainable from the school office for this purpose. The Headteacher may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances. The outcome from the request will be communicated to parents by letter no later than three days before the requested first day of absence.

Pupils Leaving School Site

All pupils in Year 7-11 must sign out at the office when leaving the school premises for a particular reason e.g. to attend a medical appointment and sign back in on return. Tutors must have been notified of such situations by letter from parents/guardians in advance. Only members of the SMT may sanction pupils leaving the school premises for any other reason. Equally, Tutors wishing to send home a child for reasons of illness etc. must consult Head Of Upper/ Lower School /Head of Pastoral Care/SMT members before doing so. Pupils should be collected by their parent/guardian and will not be allowed to go home unaccompanied.

No pupil may leave the premises without permission or make their own arrangements to go home. Telephone calls in this connection may only be made by appropriate members of staff, i.e. Head Of Upper/ Lower School / Head of Pastoral Care, SMT or Tutor.

Referrals To Warwickshire ACE Team

Attendance levels are regularly monitored and letters to parents are produced when attendance falls below certain thresholds (refer to Attendance Threshold Grid), in line with the Warwickshire ACE Model. Persistent absence will be followed up by the Head Of Upper/ Lower School and Head of Pastoral Care and appropriate strategies employed as a result of liaison with the appropriate agencies.

The Pastoral Team and Attendance Coordinator meet twice every half term to analyse the report highlighting all PA pupils across the school. They will then make referrals as necessary using the referral form to the ACE team.

- All referrals to ACE must be made using the ACE referral form when attendance is below 85% and all other interventions have been unsuccessful in improving the pupil's attendance.
- Referrals will subsequently be discussed at the Attendance meeting and a course of action agreed.
- School must have tried to contact parents to identify and attempt to resolve the attendance issue before referral is made
- All referrals should be completed fully and accompanied by a verified SIMS attendance printout.

Warwickshire County Council Attendance Compliance Enforcement Service (ACE) will consider the prosecution of parents or carers under section 7 of The Education Act 1996 in those cases where a child's attendance has fallen below the level determined as the trigger for intervention and no sufficient improvement is made. In all cases, the LA will work within Warwickshire's Code of Conduct. A copy of this can be obtained on application to the ACE Service, Warwickshire County Council, Saltisford Office Park, Warwick, CV34 4UL and is also available on the WCC website.

St Benedict's Catholic High School Attendance Strategy

In July 2011 the DFE changed the PA threshold from 20% to 15%. Any child who now has 85% attendance or lower is a Persistent Absentee (PA) and will be referred to the ACE team using the ACE referral form. There continues to be a national drive to reduce the number of Persistent Absentees.

A **Persistent Absentee (PA)** is a pupil with 85% attendance or less *whether it is authorised or unauthorised*.

Attendance Threshold Grid

The school attendance target is 97% (2013 Raise Online National Average at 94.27%) this figure has been communicated to parents, staff and pupils.

The Attendance monitoring grid is a tool for the Pastoral Team and SMT to raise awareness of numbers of pupils in each attendance band. The banding structure follows the 'Warwickshire Attendance Process Map' as outlined below:

99-100%-	Excellent
98-99%-	Good
95-97% -	Satisfactory/ Cause For Concern
92-94% -	Serious Cause For Concern/ Monitored by the Tutor
89-91% -	Parents will receive a letter of concern
85-88% -	Parents invited into school for a meeting with the Head Of Pastoral Care
Below 85% -	Classed as a persistent absentee, referred to Warwickshire ACE Team.

The Attendance Officer has responsibility for the compilation and distribution of monitoring grid / lists every three weeks to the Head of Pastoral Care. After every half term letters are sent to pupils falling into the threshold for intervention as follows:

88-91% - Letter home raising concern (refer to Appendices)

85-88% - CRITICAL BAND IN TERMS OF SCHOOL ACTION - meeting with pupil and parent required to set targets for improvement and discuss the issues which have led to poor attendance (refer to Appendices)

85% and below - Also a critical band; pupils falling into this category will have already been targeted whilst in the 85-88% % band and will now be referred to the ACE team using the referral form by the Head of Pastoral Care and tracked by the Attendance and Achievement Officer .

APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE MEETING**Meeting with parent and pupil re. attendance concerns****Name of pupil:****Tutor Group:**

1. Do you know what your attendance is? *Share details from SIMs attendance certificate and explain PA status*

2. Can you explain the reasons for non attendance at school?

3. Refer to the latest assessment data. Where do you feel you are making the most progress at school? What helps you to achieve?

4. What do you think are the reasons why you are underachieving in certain areas?

5. What support could we give you to improve?

6. Are there any issues that affect your attendance at school?

7. We need to work in partnership with parents to improve attendance. Is there anything you as a parent can do to ensure that your child's attendance improves?

Action:

-

-

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Date:

Signature of Pupil:

Signature of Parent:

Signature of Tutor:

Appendix 2: Attendance Concerns Letter 1

Date

Address

Dear Mr & Mrs Smith

Re: John Smith D.O.B 01/01/1996

I regret to inform you that the attendance record for John shows a figure of ____ % so far this year. I have enclosed a registration certificate for your information.

I understand that this may have been due to illness / medical appointments / other but several odd days of absence have also contributed to this concern.

The Local Authority and staff at St Benedict's consider any attendance figure of below 95% as detrimental to children's education. It is very difficult for a pupil to catch up on missed class room learning and set home work if they are not present in each lesson.

All pupils' attendance is regularly monitored by both the school and the Warwickshire Attendance Compliance Enforcement Service.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance please contact the school and make an appointment to see their form Tutor.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3 Attendance Concerns Letter 2

Date

Address

Dear Mr & Mrs Smith

Re: John Smith D.O.B 01/01/1996

I refer to my letter dated _____ regarding your son's attendance, which at that time was ____%. Since that date his attendance has fallen to ____%. I have enclosed a registration certificate for your information.

School will now not authorise any illness, unless some form of evidence is provided.

Staff meet regularly with a Caseworker from the Warwickshire Attendance Compliance Enforcement Service and monitor the attendance of all pupils. If John's attendance does not improve immediately St Benedict's will refer John's case to the ACE Service.

Should you wish to discuss this matter with me, or inform me of any difficulties that you are currently experiencing regarding increasing John's attendance, please contact me on the details given.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 4: Attendance Concerns Letter 3

Date

Address

Dear Mr & Mrs Smith

Re: John Smith D.O.B 01/01/1996

I refer to my letter dated _____ regarding your son's attendance, which at that time was ____%. Since that date his attendance has fallen to _____ %.

I would like to arrange a meeting at school with yourselves and John to discuss his attendance and resolve any issues that may be obstructing any improvement.

Please could you meet with me at school on _____ at _____ .

If this appointment is not convenient, please telephone me to re-arrange.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 5: Attendance Concerns Letter 4

Date

Address

Dear Mr & Mrs Smith

Re: John Smith D.O.B 01/01/1996

I refer to my letter dated _____ regarding your son's attendance, which at that time was ____%. Since that date his attendance has fallen to _____ %.

OR

I refer to our meeting on DATE where we discussed Johns attendance and strategies for improvement. At that meeting we agreed the following:

- 1st Point
- 2nd Point
- 3rd Point

However, there has not yet been any significant improvement in John's attendance. Therefore, as explained during our meeting **OR** therefore, school has now referred John's case to the Warwickshire Attendance Compliance Enforcement Service who will contact you in due course.

Should you wish to discuss this matter with me, or inform me of any difficulties that you are currently experiencing regarding increasing John's attendance, please contact me on the details given.

Yours sincerely