



St Benedict's College
Attendance and
Punctuality Policy
Draft

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Introduction:

The importance of good attendance at school cannot be over-emphasised. If pupils are to achieve their potential, they need to attend school every day. Young people who regularly miss school, without good reason, miss out. They are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

Aims:

This policy aims to:

- Improve the overall attendance of students at individual, group and whole school level.
- Maximise the attendance rate of students to ensure they achieve their full potential.
- Outline our attendance targets at individual, group and whole school level.
- Effect improvement in whole school attendance to allow us to meet our attendance targets as reflected in the School Development Plan.
- Develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance (staff, parents/guardians and students).
- Provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and students, in relation to attendance.
- Outline how we celebrate and reward excellent and improving attendance.
- Outline strategies employed to improve poor attendance.
- Define our partnership with the Education Welfare Service.

Attendance Targets:

We have high expectations of our pupils in relation to attendance. There are two attendance targets that all are challenged to meet:

Target 1: 100% Attendance - Weekly, Monthly, Termly, Annually

Target 2: 95%+ Attendance - Weekly, Monthly, Termly, Annually

Our expectations of pupils in relation to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school every day from 9.10am to 3.25pm;
- if unable to attend, remind their parents to phone school to let us know why they will be absent;
- ask parents to make routine dental or medical appointments after school or during the school holidays. (only emergency appointments should be made during school hours);
- bring in a note from their parents, if they need to leave school to attend an appointment; Appointment cards for hospital or orthodontic visits should be presented to the Form Teacher or Head of Year along with the note;
- secure permission to leave school for an appointment during school hours from the Head of Year either at the beginning of the school day or during morning registration;
- sign out at the office when leaving school during school hours and sign in again if they return on the same day;
- bring a note in the Pupil Planner, signed by a Parent/Guardian to explain any absence from school;
- Liaise with their Form Teacher if a situation arises that may require them to leave the premises during the school day.

Our expectations of pupils in relation to punctuality

Pupils are expected to:

- arrive to school on time, before morning registration/assembly at 9.10am;
- report to the office and sign the late book, stating reasons for lateness, if they arrive after morning registration/assembly is over, 9.25am.

If a pupil arrives late for school on four occasions in any calendar month, he/she will be given an after school detention. If a pupil receives two detentions for late coming in any half term, their parent will be contacted to discuss the issue.

Our expectations of parents in relation to attendance

Parents are asked to:

- make sure that your child attends school every day and remains in school for the full day, from 9.10am to 3.25pm;
- make sure your child is punctual and arrives to school on time;
- make routine medical/dental appointments after school or during the school holidays. (only emergency appointments should be made during term time);
- ensure Year 12 students attend school every day until they are officially given Study Leave;
- provide a written note to the Form Teacher/Head of Year for any appointment during school hours, in advance of or on the day of the appointment; Appointment cards for hospital or orthodontic visits should be shared;
- inform the school of the reason for your child's absence on the first day of absence (phone call);
- provide, on the first day of your child's return to school, an absence note (in Pupil Planner). This should identify dates of and reasons for absence;
- liaise with the School Office if you need to make contact with your child during the school day;
- contact your child's Head of Year if your child appears reluctant to attend school, so that we can provide both you and your child with appropriate pastoral support.

Family Holidays during Term time

Parents can demonstrate their commitment to their child's education by not taking them on holiday during term time. In each academic year there are 190 statutory school days. This allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time. In accordance with DENI policy all holidays taken during term time will be categorised as unauthorised absences.

DE: “Every Day Counts” “Miss School, Miss Out”

Every day a student is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. Attendance percentages can be misleading. For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child has missed half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that’s nearly 4 school weeks.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days learning missed.	Satisfactory
90 % Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of learning missed.	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of learning missed.	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

Educational Welfare Service

We work in partnership with the Educational Welfare Service. They support staff, parents and pupils in agreeing and implementing strategies to improve individual attendance. The EWS are notified and get involved when pupil attendance falls below 85%. The EWS provides support in a number of ways, they

- provide us with advice, guidance and support on all matters relating to attendance;
- meet Heads of Year and Pastoral Care Co-ordinator monthly to discuss pupils of concern and their progress;
- make an assessment of an individual pupil’s situation and develop a support plan for pupils/families for school and home;
- make referrals to other support services, eg. Medical Officer, Educational psychologist.

Our expectations of staff in relation to attendance:

Members of the Pastoral Team are expected to:

FORM TEACHER

- record and monitor attendance on a daily basis by completing the morning register on SIMS.
- speak with students individually if attendance is a cause for concern. (95%-100%)
- collect absence notes and code pupil absence on SIMS. Follow up on absence notes not received.
- set attendance targets for individual students.
- monitor student attendance and identify and respond to absence trends.
- monitor student punctuality and challenge late coming. Impose sanctions when appropriate.
- request that the office contact home if a pupil is absent from School on two consecutive days and the Parent/Guardian has not offered a reason for absence. Refer the student to the Head of Year for follow up, if a reason for absence is not established.
- use SIMS to alert colleagues to students who are leaving school to attend approved appointments.

HEAD OF YEAR

- advise and support their year team on all attendance matters.
- set attendance targets for individuals and their year group.
- monitor student attendance on an ongoing basis and respond to concerns.
- meet with the EWO monthly to discuss students who should be referred to the service or who are currently receiving support from the EWS.
- meet with the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator weekly to review year group, form class and individual attendance and agree intervention strategies required.
- deal with students who have attendance that is below 95%.
(refer- how do we support pupils with poor attendance?)
- reward students who have shown excellent or improving attendance.
- monitor student punctuality and deal with persistent late comers. Impose sanctions and liaise with parents when appropriate

PASTORAL CARE CO-ORDINATOR

- develop, disseminate and lead our whole school attendance improvement strategy.
- monitor and evaluate whole school attendance data on an ongoing basis. Disseminate it to key stakeholders.
- provide monthly reports to Principal and SLT on whole school attendance.
- set whole school attendance targets and monitor progress against them.
- develop and ensure the implementation of the Whole School Attendance Policy.
- advise and support the Heads of Year on all attendance matters.
- make referrals to the EWS and meet with the EWO monthly to discuss the progress of students who are currently receiving support from the EWS.
- meet with the Heads of Year weekly to review year group, form class and individual attendance and agree intervention strategies required.
- deal with students who have attendance that is below 90%.
(refer- how do we support pupils with poor attendance?)
- co-ordinate attendance rewards at whole school level.
- monitor student punctuality and deal with persistent late comers. Impose sanctions and liaise with parents when appropriate.

PRINCIPAL AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS

- The Principal has overall responsibility for whole school attendance. She is supported by the BOG who regularly review whole school attendance data and performance against attendance targets defined in the SDP.

How do we celebrate pupils with excellent or improving attendance?

Attendance rewards are an integral part of the whole school reward system.

Pupils are recognised at individual level on a termly and annual basis.

Form classes are recognised on a monthly, termly and annual basis.

Post cards home, attendance certificates, monetary prizes, sweet treats, reward trips are all used to celebrate excellent or improving attendance.

How do we support pupils with poor attendance?

We encourage all our pupils to achieve full attendance but recognise that circumstances, such as illness or bereavement, may result in pupil absence. In such circumstances we offer our full support and liaise closely with Parents/Guardians and external agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful return to school.

We offer support and advice to Parents/Guardians and pupils who have poor attendance, making sure that they are fully aware that ongoing non-attendance can lead to underperformance and underachievement.

We support parents and pupils in the following ways:

- Form Teachers record and monitor attendance on a daily basis, identifying absence trends. They speak with pupils individually if attendance is a cause for concern.
- Form Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their personal attendance and to record and monitor it in the Pupil Planner.
- If a pupil is absent from School on two consecutive days and the Parent/Guardian has not offered a reason for absence, a call will be made by the office. If a reason for absence cannot be established, the matter will be referred to the Head of Year for follow up.
- If a pupil's attendance is declining and is below 90% the Head of Year will contact the Parents/Guardians by telephone to raise our concern. If contact cannot be made, a letter will be issued putting our concerns in writing.
- If a pupil's attendance has failed to improve, then a letter will be sent home requesting a meeting with the Head of Year to discuss the issue, to offer support and to agree possible strategies for improvement.
- If these interventions have no impact on the pupil's attendance or we have been unable to make contact with the Parents/Guardians, the matter will then be dealt with by the Head of Pastoral Care. He will seek an early appointment with the Parents/Guardians to express the seriousness of the issue and the likely consequences of the pupil's ongoing poor attendance on their academic attainment and pastoral progression.
- In cases where pupil attendance falls below 85%, Parents/Guardians will be notified by letter that a referral to the Educational Welfare Service is required. We will continue to suggest how this action may be avoided by working closely with the Parents/Guardians to improve attendance outcomes.

Recording Attendance

Attendance is recorded two times during the school day, in morning registration at 9.10am and after lunch at 1.45 (period 5). Attendance at these two sessions make up one full day's attendance.

The following web links offer useful information on attendance:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-attendance-matters-parents-guide>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-attendance-absence-and-law>

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually and approved every 2 years by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, pupils and staff.