BCCET Attendance Policy

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School

Executive Headteacher: Mrs M Graham

Start Date:	Review Date:
January 2024	January 2025

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Attendance:

Name:	Role:
Mrs M. Graham	Executive Headteacher
Mrs C. Sutherland	Headteacher
Mrs K. Myhill	Child Wellbeing Lead

Our School Attendance Aspiration is 100% Our School Attendance Target is 97%

"Attendance needs to be everyone's business, it's not just an abstract metric – and we must do everything we can – at national, local and school level – to make sure children are in school, every day, and ready to learn. Not just for their future, but for their wellbeing and safety too." Children's' Commissioner Rachel De Souza

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust

The vision of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust is that "As a family of schools inspired by Christ, we aim to enable each individual to fulfil their God given potential. Excellence for everyone through learning, respect and partnership is the heart of our Trust." Underpinning this, is the Trust's mission of "Better Schools, Better Communities and Better Futures in Christ"

The Trust is committed to ensuring each school develops a robust attendance strategy that supports all learners in regular and punctual school attendance. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to ensure their formation: spiritual and social; intellectual and emotional; aesthetic and physical through the provision of a broad, balanced and aspirational curriculum.

Our Attendance Policy considers the guidance set out in the DFE Document 'School Attendance; Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2020'.

The applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website or available from reception for those without access to the internet.

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

*   The Education Act 2002
*   Keeping Children Safe in Education
*   Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
*   Attendance guidance DfE (2022/23)
*   The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and latest amendment 2016

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

The impact of poor attendance on academic progress

Children who miss school on a regular basis, are damaging their future life choices. Nationally, it has been proven that children with poor attendance in primary school miss out on making the expected progress in vital literacy and numeracy skills, and find it difficult to catch up. In secondary school, 19 days' absence correlates, on average, to a grade at GCSE in all subjects.

Scope and Purpose

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our schools are fully aware of, and are clear about, the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

At all phases of education, we will develop excellence in attendance and punctuality in all schools through ensuring:

*   a whole school culture in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school
*   a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
*   a curriculum offer which incentivises good attendance for all pupils
*   robust school systems which provide timely, useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns
*   clear, fair and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences; systems must be inclusive and appropriate for all pupils
*   clear strategy for communication which raises awareness to parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education
*   every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance, receiving

regular professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively

- a dedicated senior leader with clearly assigned responsibilities for attendance is identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan
- governors have an accurate view of school attendance data benchmarked against national and similar schools and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate
- effective use of attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance
- work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff, identified partner agencies and Local Authority Attendance service to ensure that **all** pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

Roles and Responsibilities

Our schools will:

- accept that outstanding attendance is everyone's responsibility
- formally recognise good attendance and punctuality (above 97%)
- challenge attendance that is less than good and set targets for students to improve
- intervene when poor attendance / punctuality becomes a problem and before it becomes a habit
- follow up on any non-attendance with contact on the first day of absence with a phone call and / or home visit
- deal sympathetically with any problem a student may have which is causing attendance / punctuality to decline and always stay in regular contact with parents / carers
- act swiftly to reduce absence, in particular persistent absence, with a specific focus on immediate support for vulnerable learners
- work actively with children and families in Nursery and Reception classes to emphasise the benefits of high attendance; to instill and reinforce good habits of attendance from the start of their educational journey
- maintain appropriate registration processes.
- communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- refer to the Attendance Officer/Responsible Person and/or the Local Authority or appropriate agencies of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- ensure every child of statutory school age has access to full time education
- not grant extended leave during term time and will automatically refer to the Local Authority to fine
- involve other external agencies if we believe there could be wider safeguarding issues surrounding the child

The Head teacher will:

- ensure effective monitoring of school attendance, including the use of Trust data dashboards to identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- ensure a dedicated senior leader with clearly assigned responsibilities for attendance is identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan
- monitor and interrogate local and national data, feedback from schools and intelligence from partner agencies to develop strategies to improve attendance
- make and supporting referrals to the Local Authority
- liaise with the Attendance Officer/Responsible Person to monitor attendance and implement strategies for improvement on a whole school and individual basis.
- liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

- work alongside those responsible for BCCET Mental Health Co-ordination and Counselling Service
- keep up to date with DFE changes

Class teachers will:

- maintain class registers, completing them accurately in accordance with school policy
- where poor attendance occurs ensuring appropriate school staff are informed
- emphasise with their classes the importance of good attendance and promptness
- ensure appropriate school staff are informed of additional information provided by the child so it can be recorded in line with school policy
- discuss attendance issues at parent evenings where necessary
- celebrate good and improved attendance

Staff in the School Office will:

- collate and record registration and attendance information.
- complete First Day Response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or text message)
- take and record messages from parents regarding absence
- record details of children who arrive late or go home early via Arbor
- send out standard letters regarding attendance regularly and consistently

Pastoral staff will:

- arrange home visits and attend meetings with the parent/carer(s)
- meet regularly with identified pupils to discuss attendance related issues
- identify early with parent/carer(s) the reason for poor attendance, working in partnership with parent/carer(s) to achieve improved attendance
- work with the Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance, LA and Attendance Officer, where appropriate, to monitor attendance levels, identify patterns of absence and create strategies to improve attendance
- work alongside the Senior Leadership Team with referrals to outside agencies for additional support for families including School Health, CYPS, Attendance Service, Police, Youth Offending Team & Social Care, where necessary
- support school leaders with the production of appropriate attendance plans; monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of plan regularly

Families will:

- encourage their child to attend school daily, be punctual and inform the school immediately if their child is absent
- inform the school of any hospital appointment in advance unavoidably scheduled during school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (appointment card/letter).
- contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- inform the school of any problems which might affect their child's attendance so that problems can be quickly identified and intervention plans implemented
- cooperate with the academy if their child's attendance / punctuality is unsatisfactory
- working in partnership with school to promote exceptional attendance with their child

Students will:

- always attend school unless prevented by a specific illness or unavoidable circumstances
- always arrive to school and lessons on time
- remain positive and resilient even in the hardest of times.
- speak to a member of staff if support is needed.

Child Wellbeing Lead is responsible for:

At Our Lady of the Rosary we have employed a Child Wellbeing Lead to offer additional support to Parents / carers and pupils. This includes support in relation to:

- improving school attendance by carrying out home visits, attending meeting with the parent / carer
- to identify with parents the reason for poor attendance and work with parents to achieve improved attendance and reduce exclusions
- monitor attendance levels & punctuality
- offer parent contracts and attendance plans
- identify patterns of absence
- talk to pupils on a 1:1 basis regarding attendance related matters
- offer group work sessions to remove the barriers to attendance including friendship groups
- refer to outside agencies for additional support for families including School Health, CYPS, Attendance Service, Police, Youth Offending Team & Social Care

Procedures:

"Tenacity is very important when schools are trying to improve attendance. As one leader put it: It's about parents knowing that we are not going to let go" DfE May 2022 Improving School Attendance

At all phases of education, schools will undertake the following procedures to support exceptional attendance by:

- monitoring and interrogating local and national data, feedback from schools and intelligence from partner agencies to develop strategies to improve attendance and monitor impact (including join up with early help, children's social care and other LA services)
- maintaining regular communication with leaders across our Trust Schools and through local networks and forums, to share local and national data, disseminate best practice and respond to intelligence from school leaders
- utilising fully intelligence gathered from across Trust schools via the Trust attendance survey, ensuring good practice is shared and embedded.
- engaging partners from virtual school, early help and social care teams to ensure that they understand attendance expectations and ensure that the vulnerable cohort they serve are supported to sustain good levels of attendance
- working closely with local health services and school nursing teams to ensure practitioners understand attendance requirements/responsibilities and work collaboratively with them to link families into the right support
- weekly analysis of attendance data (register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking) to ensure that appropriate intervention is delivered quickly to address absence
- weekly reports to staff across the school from attendance leaders to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures effectively
- establishing a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
- creating action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families, for example, children's social care and early help services. Commission or deliver interventions to improve attendance

- ensuring additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers for pupils where absence becomes persistent. Where necessary this includes working with partners
- ensuring join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed
- intensifying support through statutory children's social care where safeguarding concerns exist
- ensuring attendance leaders monitor the impact of any intervention, adjusting if necessary and using findings to inform future strategy. *Where interventions fail to address attendance issues, identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention*
- establishing robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem:
  - sending letters to parents and carers
  - first day response and phone calls to parents by 9.00am
  - weekly tutor review
  - creating attendance clinics
  - home visits where appropriate
  - engaging with the Trust School Improvement Partners
  - engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
  - using fixed penalty notices as outlined by the DfE
  - engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate
- monitoring the implementation and quality of escalation procedures (and intervention), for example, sampling of case files by senior leader with responsibility for attendance
- evaluating the impact of escalation procedures half termly with School Attendance Officer/LA/Responsible Person, seeking robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work and that reflect the school context best
- following local authority codes of conduct, policies and procedures and make referrals for statutory intervention when interventions have not resulted in improved attendance and relevant triggers / thresholds are met
- engaging governors in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment
- providing a termly attendance report to stakeholders
- clearly communicating to staff, parents and pupils our expectations using the following traffic light system:

Attendance Flag	Information
Red – Under 92%	Pupils in the red zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult and often exhibit poor behaviour. Pupils with this level of absence have large gaps in their learning and struggle to make expected progress despite support. Legal action may also be taken against Parents/Carers of Red Zone pupils.
Amber – 92-96.99%	Pupils in the amber zone are still at risk of underachieving due to the absence level. Pupils who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress. Pupils in this zone have gaps in their learning which put additional pressures on children and parents to fill those gaps with the support of the school. If your child in in the Amber Zone we will contact you to complete a suitable action/intervention plan to help avoid attendance falling into the Red Zone.

Green – 97+%	We expect pupils to have Green attendance throughout their education. Those in the Green zone have minimal learning gaps which are addressed within the school day. This means that they are more likely to do well in examinations, achieve their full potential, have better job opportunities, develop good mental health and can develop strong friendships within school.

Monitoring Attendance

School office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the School Information Management System. Regular meetings are held with the Head teacher and the Attendance Officer/Responsible Person/Leader to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full and accurate details of the reason for their absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Response

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.05am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will attempt to contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home and operate remotely, where appropriate, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Local Authority to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card/letter or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries. Alternatively, we may make a referral to the School Health Advisor to offer support.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head Teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Parents are encouraged to keep open lines of communication with school over absence as persistent absence can be considered a safeguarding matter.

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Registers

- Registers are legal documents and will be marked twice a day (am/pm)
- Parents must always give reasons for absence to the school.
- Schools are to determine whether absence is authorised or unauthorised in exceptional circumstances, considering factors such as frequency, duration, attendance patterns, i.e. within reason. Staff must be observant of situations where absence is continually condoned by parents.

The guidelines below clarify possible actions

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
Illness	Absence without a valid reason
Medical Appointment / Dental (For the time of appointment including travelling)	Latecomers beyond 30 minutes after the session has started
Family Bereavement	Persistent lateness within the first 30 minutes of the day
Religious Observance	Babysitting children including siblings.
Interview / Work Experience	Shopping during school time.
Excluded Children	Special occasions, e.g. birthday.
Sports / Music / Exams	Holidays
Agreed other educational activity at the discretion of the Head teacher	

Reintegrating Long Term Absentees

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so staff may wish to arrange a phased or gradual return, allocation of a 'Key Worker', consider whether Special Needs support is appropriate, ensure that all staff are aware of the situation and nominate a key person to monitor the child's reintegration into school. All children must feel welcomed back and know from whom they can seek help. Never leave children sitting in corridors or outside an office for long periods.

Registration

All school doors open at 8.45am (KS2) and 8.40 (KS1) am until 9am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05 am and by 1pm (KS2) and 1.30pm (KS1).

All attendance records are documented using the School Management Information System. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of 1996 Education Act. The school seeks to improve general punctuality and to improve attitude of persistent offenders by:-

- informing parents of our expectations and offer ways of helping combat lateness.
- parents of persistent offenders must be contacted, and reported to the Attendance Officer/Responsible Person if no improvement.
- praise and acknowledge latecomers who improve.
- ensure that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons.
- all children and parents must understand that lateness is actively discouraged, although sensitivity may be appropriate in some cases.
- The Child Wellbeing Lead will be used to support pupils and families with any of the above issues.

Schools may use other incentives to improve levels of punctuality

Once the doors are closed at 9am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. When a child is late, this will be discussed with the parent to look at barriers to arriving to school on time to see if any targeted support work needs to take place. Conversations with students around lateness, will take place outside of learning time to ensure that they are able to fully access their curriculum time. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 97%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In our school, parents are to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. If we become concerned about your child's attendance, we will inform parents/carers of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via letters which are sent home. In some cases, parents/carers may be offered a parent contract. A parent contract is an agreement / action plan which looks at ways to work together to improve attendance. There will be opportunities for

the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. It is common practice that this may be escalated to the Attendance Officer/Responsible Person. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time with support from the school, then it is the responsibility of the school to make a referral to the Local Authority.

The Attendance Service will look at each case and may issue fixed penalty notices to parents where there is poor attendance.

The LA Attendance Service working jointly with Legal Services may also consider:

- Applying for a parenting order
- Applying for an education supervision order
- School Attendance Order (If parent has not registered their child in a school)
- Community Order

The LA Attendance Officer can remotely check and monitor attendance levels. The LA Attendance Officer regularly carries out register checks to identify children with low attendance.

Our success in fully embedding and implementing these Guiding Principles will be measured by our Key Performance Indicator: "Pupil attendance rates compare favourably with national comparators. Particularly for those pupils that are disadvantaged or have Special Educational Needs".

The greatest impact of high rates of attendance:

- Pupils' physical, moral and intellectual God given talents: enabling all pupils to flourish as a whole and complete person, preparing them fully to enter the world as active citizens.
- Values, motivation, aspirations and the moral imperatives that inform their choices and actions.
- The development of knowledge: Exceptional attendance allows **progress in knowing more and remembering more**.
- Pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- Pupils' knowledge of where they are in their learning journey and can articulate it.
- The removal of barriers to enable exceptional attendance
- Swift intervention when attendance falls below exceptional
- Strong relationships with parents/carers to ensure communications are timely and effective
- Pupils' develop exceptional routines and habits in relation to punctuality and attendance.
- Pupils being ready to succeed in their next phase of their journey

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes, descriptions and meanings

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present at morning registration
\	Present (PM)	Present at afternoon registration
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Child is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the School
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT approved by School)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence – School has been notified that a child will be absent due to illness
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 - School is not satisfied with reason for child's absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave - Year 11/13 child is on study leave during their public examinations	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
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Key

Present	Unauthorised absence
Authorised absence	Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances	