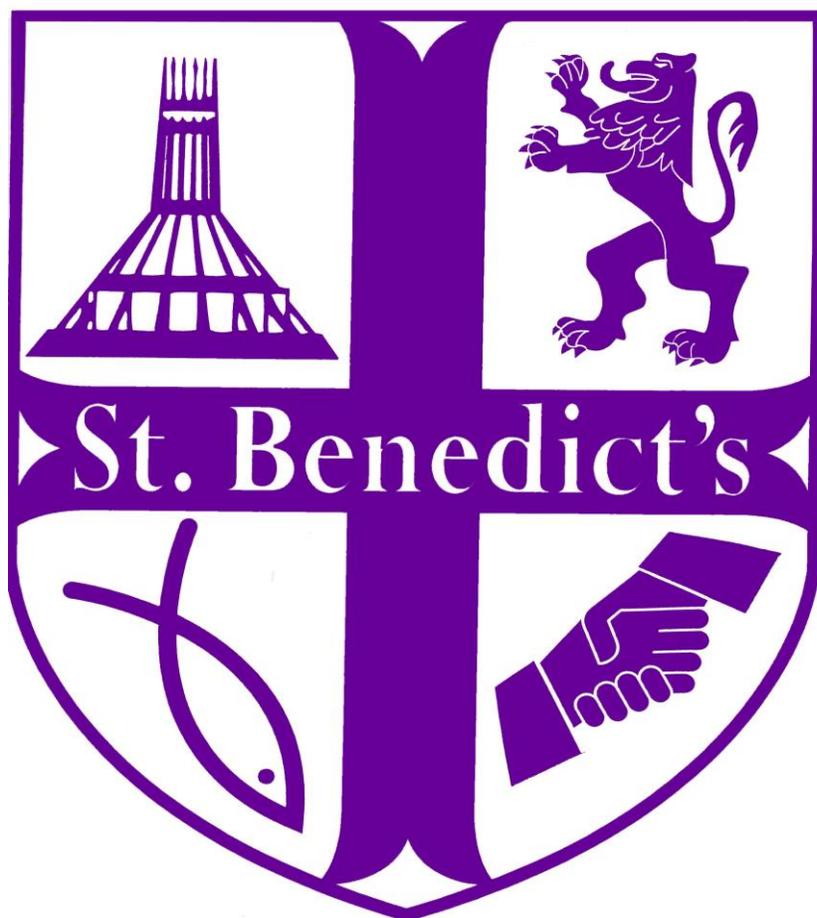


# St Benedict's

CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

# **St Benedict's Catholic Primary** **Whole School Attendance Policy**



**Last Reviewed: September 2017**

**Next Review: September 2018**

## **Policy Rationale**

St Benedict's is committed to providing a full and excellent education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which, acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year, school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both national and Sefton's attendance targets.

To meet these objectives, school will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support

## **Purpose of an Attendance Policy**

1. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
2. To encourage individual pupils and whole classes to improve their rates of attendance.
3. To provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils.
4. To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
5. To review systematic approaches to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop reward and sanction systems.
7. To promote effective partnerships with Home School and Education Welfare Officers and with other services and agencies.
8. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence or continuing chronic medical conditions.

9. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.

### **Aim No 1**

To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for All Those Associated with the School Including Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Governors

1. Use staff/school handbook, prospectus, DfES literature.
2. Produce regular reports to parents/governors.
3. Hold induction Reception Year evening for parents/pupils.
4. Produce newsletters.
5. Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff.
6. Display materials at focal points – entrance screen, hall, classrooms etc. and on website.
7. Discuss attendance issues in pastoral staff evaluation meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings (e.g. attendance review meetings.)
8. Continue award systems, certificates, rewards etc.

### **Aim No 2**

To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
4. Monitor whole school progress termly and weekly for targeted pupils.

### **Aim No 3**

To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils

1. Highlight attendance in;
  - Assemblies /displays/website
  - Key Staff (Miss Hughes and Mrs Rugen) available to talk to pupils and parents
  - Making use of available resources
2. Set aside time for parents to speak to staff.
3. Seek improved communication with parents e.g. when parents ring in.
4. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for and from parents.
5. Involve parents from earliest stage.
6. Inform parents of services available in school e.g. Breakfast Club, one-to-one support.

### **Aim No 4**

To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
2. Make phone/text/letter contact, using designated school staff, on **first day of absence**.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
6. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
7. Have clear procedures prior to referral to Education Welfare Officer.
8. Review attendance regularly.
9. Be familiar with the Education Welfare Officer' referral and recording system.

## **Aim No 5**

To Review Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data

1. More use of SIMS programme.
2. Standardise recording of:
  - authorised/unauthorised absence (and to have decided after two weeks)
  - educational activity
  - presence
3. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
4. Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
  - governors
  - pastoral staff
  - other school staff
  - parents
  - pupils (individual or groups)
  - education welfare officer
5. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness

## **Aim No 6**

To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions:

1. Actively promote attendance and associated reward and effective sanctions.
2. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
3. Involve pupils in system evaluation.
4. Make use of imaginative and immediate sanctions.
5. Take action, which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, e.g. Home School Liaison and Education Welfare Officer, Parent, Behaviour Support Service.

## **Aim No 7**

To Promote Effective Partnerships With the Education Welfare Officer and With Other Services and Agencies.

1. Designated key staff for liaison with Education Welfare Officer and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Welfare Officer.
3. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
4. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Welfare Officer.
5. Hold regular attendance review with key school staff.
6. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
7. Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community e.g. community police contact officer, YOT.
8. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
9. Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

## **Aim No 8**

To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Pupil When Planning Reintegration Following Significant Periods of Absence or Continuing Chronic Medical Condition. (This is arranged in conjunction with School Health).

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff in/or reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider peer support and mentoring.
5. Involve parents as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include key school staff, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.

## **Aim No 9**

To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication Between Home and School

1. Continue first day absence contact.
2. Make full use of computer generated letters and texts.
3. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
4. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Aim 3).
5. Provide information in a user-friendly way
6. Encourage all parents into school.
7. Keep parents informed of changes in legislation and how it affects them – e.g. cessation of authorisation of term time holidays.

## **School Procedures**

- Any child who is absent from school must have their absence recorded as being authorised or unauthorised. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.
- **Lateness** – Morning registration will take place at **9.00am**. The registers will remain open for **30 minutes**. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival. The afternoon registration will be at **1.00pm** for infants and **1.15pm** for juniors. Pupils who are late must report to the office and this will be recorded in the 'late book'.
- **First Day of Absence** – Parents/carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of the child's absence. If this does not happen, the school will respond by contacting the family by telephone. The information which is collected will be entered on the Absence Record Sheet inside the register. The person responsible for this will be Miss Hughes (Clerical Assistant/Attendance Support) and Mrs F Rugen (Pastoral Mentor). Miss Hughes will transfer this information to the registers by using the appropriate codes to record attendance information.
- **More Than One Day Absent** – Miss Hughes and Mrs Rugen will remain in contact with parents. Referrals to the Education Welfare Officer will be made as and when appropriate. If unauthorised absences rise to over 15%, a referral will be made.

- **Frequent Absence** – It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of, and bring attention to, any attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil is identified as developing a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful and attendance is below 85%, with above 15% unauthorised absences, the school will refer to the Education Welfare Officer, who will conduct an assessment of the situation in conjunction with the attendance team. If the problem appears to be a medical one, school can refer to School Health, to establish why the child is frequently absent from school; a health care plan may also be put in place.
- **A Welcome Back** – It is important that on return from an absence, all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. If necessary, missed work should be completed at break times or taken home for additional homework.
- **Absence Notes** – Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for a short period (4 weeks). If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.
- **Promoting Attendance** – The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/School Agreement can be used in this way. Newsletters will include information about attendance.
- **Holidays in Term Time** – Holidays during term time are no longer allowed with effect from September 2013 and can only be authorised at the Head's discretion in exceptional circumstances.
- **Attendance Awards** – The school will use the following systems to reward pupils, especially those who have good or improving attendance:
  - 'In on time to Begin, In to Win' – Individual classes with attendance and/or punctuality concerns are targeted for a period of two weeks. All children who have been in school and on time every day will be awarded with a chance in a lucky dip.
  - At the end of the year, children who have attained 100% attendance are rewarded.
  - An extra play for the class with the highest attendance for the week. This may include the activity trail or structured play.
  - The attendance figures, in percentage order, will be displayed in the hall, on the screen in the foyer and on the website.

## **Family Support**

Letters will be sent to parents when absences are unexplained once a child has returned to school. If no reason is given, the absence is then unauthorised. Parents of children whose percentage attendance is falling, are invited to meet with the attendance key staff for an informal chat. Support and sign posting to other agencies is offered when appropriate. Parents are informed of all facilities offered through the school – i.e. Breakfast Club and any further action is decided upon. Parents whose children are causing concern due to frequent absences and/ or lateness are invited to attend mock panel meetings with the Key Attendance Staff, Headteacher and Governor with responsibility for attendance. These meetings are held in school and a period for improvement is set before further action is decided upon.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Formal warning to parents/carers**

Section 444A, Education Act 1996

**[The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013]**

Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer

Name of Child.....

D.O.B.....

Your [son/daughter's] poor attendance at school is causing serious concern. The school has been open for [number] sessions [number] days between [date] and [date]. Your [son/daughter] has been absent for [number] sessions [days], of which [number] sessions [number] days have not been authorised by the school. I have attached [name of child's] attendance record for this academic year for your information.

I am now writing to inform you that [name of child's] attendance is such that you are liable to be issued with a Penalty Notice and to formally warn you that this will happen unless there is an immediate and sustained improvement in [name of child's] attendance. You should therefore be aware that a Penalty Notice will be issued [by post] if [name of child] has any further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days.

I enclose a copy of the leaflet about school attendance and Penalty Notices which should help you, but if you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Attendance and Welfare Service, on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Tracy McKeating/Julie Palin

**Managers – Attendance and Welfare Service**

## **Appendix 2**

Section 444A, Education Act 1996  
**[The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations  
2013]**

Dear

Re:

Date of Birth:

School:

The Headteacher of ..... School advised you on [date] of the decision not to grant your child discretionary leave of absence between [date] and [date].

As your child's unauthorised absence has exceeded the penalty notice threshold, I have issued you with the enclosed penalty notice. Please read the notice carefully as it states the offence and the methods of payment.

I wish to remind you that the penalty is £60 if paid by 3.00pm on [date] or £120 if paid after 3.00pm on [date] but before 3.00pm on [date]. You will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for this offence should you fail to pay the fine by the closing date.

Please note, that where there is more than one parent/carer liable for this offence, separate notices are issued to each person, per individual child, i.e. there are no duplicate letters and each penalty [and associated total invoice] you and, where applicable, your spouse/partner receive must be paid.

Yours sincerely

Tracy McKeating/Julie Palin  
**Managers – Attendance and Welfare Service**



# ST. BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

COPY LANE, NETHERTON, BOOTLE, MERSEYSIDE, L30 7PG  
TEL: 0151 526 6423 FAX: 0151 531 9530  
Website: [www.stbenedictsprimary.co.uk](http://www.stbenedictsprimary.co.uk) Email: [admin.stbenedicts@schools.sefton.gov.uk](mailto:admin.stbenedicts@schools.sefton.gov.uk)

Headteacher Mr M Phillips

## Appendix 3

### **Request for issuing Penalty Notice Unapproved leave of absence during term-time Section 444a – Education Act 1996**

**This form is to be completed by the Head Teacher**

I am writing to request that the local authority consider issuing a fixed penalty notice to the parent(s) of the following pupil:

**Name of pupil:** .....

**D.O.B.** .....

**Year Group:** .....

**School/College:** St Benedict's Catholic Primary.

**Address:** Copy Lane, Bootle. Merseyside L30 7PG

#### **Parent 1**

Name:

.....

D.O.B. ....

Address:

.....

..... Post Code .....

#### **Parent 2**

Name:

.....

D.O.B. ....

Address:

.....

..... Post Code .....

I confirm that this pupil is a registered pupil at: **St Benedict's Catholic Primary School**, and that the admissions register for the school shows the above named to be his/her parent\*.

I can confirm that all our attendance registers are marked in respect of authorised or unauthorised absence in accordance with the guidance issued by the Department for Education, i.e. using registration 'G' for 'Family Holiday' (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement).'



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COPY LANE, NETHERTON, BOOTLE, MERSEYSIDE, L30 7PG  
TEL: 0151 526 6423 FAX: 0151 531 9530

Website: [www.stbenedictsprimary.co.uk](http://www.stbenedictsprimary.co.uk) Email: [admin.stbenedicts@schools.sefton.gov.uk](mailto:admin.stbenedicts@schools.sefton.gov.uk)

Headteacher Mr M Phillips

## **Appendix 4**

Dear Parent/Carer

I refer to your application for ..... to be absent ..... days for a family holiday.

Following due consideration, I am unable to agree to your request as the reason provided is not considered as a special circumstance.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Managers of the Attendance and Welfare Service for information. I must warn you that, if you do take your child out of school for this time, the absences will not be authorised and the Attendance and Welfare Managers may issue a penalty notice to each parent of £60 for each child, to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid, the Attendance and Welfare Service will then institute legal proceedings against you in the Magistrate's Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

The matter will also be recorded on your child's school record.

If you are intending to take a holiday during term time, you **must** make an appointment to see me with Mrs Rugen.

Yours sincerely

**Mr M Phillips**  
**Headteacher**