



## *Attendance policy*

### **Mission Statement:**

Botwell House Catholic Primary School is distinguished by the care, courtesy and concern extended to all its members, regardless of cultural differences and strives to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ to:

**“Love one another as I have loved you”**

Through an effective partnership between home, school and parish and through a broad and balanced curriculum, each valued individual is encouraged to grow in their journey of faith and strive towards excellence.

Botwell House Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her potential.

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Delegated to:	SLT –Attendance Lead
Current Reviewer:	Kevin Oakley

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## 1. Aims

Botwell House Catholic Primary School community is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Helen Slater (AHT) and can be contacted via [office@botwellhouse.school](mailto:office@botwellhouse.school)

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with Attendance support team to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Carolyn O'Grady and can be contacted via [office@botwellhouse.school](mailto:office@botwellhouse.school).

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (/ or N), and submitting this information to the school office by 8:55am. This is a statutory responsibility. In the absence of the class teacher, the other teacher i.e., cover teacher, PPA teacher or HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) who is undertaking responsibility for the class will assume responsibility.

### **3.6 Office staff**

School Office (administrative) staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the SIMS MIS system.

- Relay messages from parents/carers to the teachers in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence by 8:30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 3 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between the following times on each school day:

Nursery: 8:30am-8:45am

Reception – Year 6: 8:35am – 8:50am

The register for the first session will be open at 8:40am and will be kept open until 8:55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm and will be kept open until 12:55pm.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7) and should do the same for each subsequent day of the absence.

Families can call 0208 573 2229 (from 5:00am,) utilising option 1 and leaving a message. They should ensure that they provide a brief description of symptoms/illness.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are already concerns about attendance such as being persistently absent (less than 90%,) then the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents must provide evidence of any appointments that have been made.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Refer to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

Where there is a pattern or prevalence of lateness both at drop off in the morning and/or after school for collection, parents will be reminded about the correct timings as early as a pattern is

emerging. Following this we will consider passing on the costs for the supervision of the child. The rate for this is as follows: £5.00 per 5 minutes past collection. Ultimately, if a child is not collected then the school will contact children's services for advice as this is a form of neglect. Where concerns are being raised, a letter will notify the family as early as possible.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact attendance support team, Children's Services, or the Police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

At any point that concerns are raised regarding attendance or punctuality a report and covering letter will be passed on to the family with an offer of informal support. At the end of the Autumn term, where a child is deemed persistently absent, a report will be sent home. From this point, persistently absent reports will be produced on a half termly basis.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be truly 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as incidences that happen very seldom within one's life. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website and school office in person. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Invalid reasons where a precedence has been set are as follows:

- Visiting unwell family or aging relatives
- To enable parents to access medical treatment that is otherwise available on the NHS
- Family events such as weddings, birthdays etc.
- Holidays

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The value of education is intertwined within the curriculum offer. Parents and carers are annually reminded about this via the 'Meet the Teacher' session undertaken early in the Autumn term. Attendance is regularly featured in the Botwell Bulletin.

Furthermore 100% attendance certificates are used on a termly basis, with most improved attendance following the first half term and every half term hence forth.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level



- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

## **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by Mrs. Helen Slater SLT (Senior Leadership Team) – Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma, and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Exceptional leave request form

**Hillingdon Deanery Catholic Schools**

**Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances**



The schools in the Hillingdon Catholic Deanery follow the advice and guidelines provided by the Department for Education and the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances **are exceptional**. **Please note:** there is no general right to authorised absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised, and we will consider legal action. No request for authorised absence will be considered if your child's attendance is below 95% unless there is evidence of long-term medical circumstances to explain this. You may be required to meet with the Headteacher or the Governing Body following any unauthorised absence.

**You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.**

Schools can only agree to absence for a holiday if they believe there are special exceptional circumstances which warrant it and therefore in most cases such requests will be refused by the Headteacher.

**Section A: To the Headteacher. I wish to apply for**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and times)

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings who are also applying for leave of absence, please enter their names and their school below:

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Other School(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B:** Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence, the circumstances which make your application exceptional and why the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event, please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements, please also attach supporting documentation. If you require additional space, please continue on the other side of the page. Please note: the minimum amount of time possible should be requested for attendance at family events.

**Further documentation may be required (i.e. flight confirmation/ letters/invitations)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Section C:** I am the parent/carer. The information I have given on this form is correct. If custody is shared both parents/carers must sign.

Signature (parent/carer) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (parent/carer) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances.**  
**Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (Headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.**

**Section D: For school use only.**

**Tick as appropriate.**

Child's attendance this year: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's attendance last year: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's attendance this year: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's attendance last year: \_\_\_\_\_

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact:

\_\_\_\_\_

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's education al progress.

Request approved for \_\_\_number of days from the dates and times

\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parents/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this time may be subject to a penalty notice for non-attendance being issued. Authorisation will not be granted at either the start or the end of a school term or during any Test or Assessment period.**

Headteacher's comment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher: ..... Date:

.....

Parent copy  School office copy  Class copy