

Bishop Challoner Catholic College



Next Review

December 2024

Review Period

2 Year

FGB Reviewed

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Current Status

Complete

Staff Owner

D. Hearnden

Government/DfE Requirement

Statutory

Attendance Policy

(including amendment to include long term absence)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Bishop Challoner Catholic College is dedicated to promoting a distinctive Catholic ethos by upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church. We are committed to developing the full potential of every individual, regardless of culture, race, religion, disability, or special need by creating a safe, orderly environment where all members of the community work diligently in a spirit of co-operation and treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times.

Bishop Challoner Catholic College places high priority on good attendance and punctuality, believing that it promotes effective learning and has a significant impact on personal development, progress and attainment, whilst at and beyond school. Regular attendance is crucial if students are to reach their potential and be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic success.

Bishop Challoner will strive to provide a welcoming environment for all students and staff and will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends regularly and is punctual to both school and lessons.

Aims of the Policy

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at Bishop Challoner Catholic College.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to students and parents.
- To develop a systematic approach to collating and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive communication between home and school.
- To maintain a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To promote effective partnerships with outside agencies.

Parents Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act states that: 'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence.'

Parents (or the person with parental responsibility) are primarily responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at the School on time, correctly dressed and prepared to learn.

If a student is prevented from attending Bishop Challoner because of sickness or other unavoidable cause then it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the student's absence, ideally this should be by telephone on the first day of absence and confirmed in writing. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time.

Students' Responsibilities

Students are responsible for making sure that their attendance and punctuality is maintained at the highest level.

- They should attend the school and all of their lessons on time, equipped and ready to learn.
- Following an absence, students must bring in a note explaining the reason for their absence.
- Students must follow the correct procedures when arriving late to the school.
- Any problems with attendance should be discussed with their form tutor, Student Support Co-ordinator, SENCO, Head of Year or Vice Principal.

Staff Responsibilities

All the staff at Bishop Challoner Catholic College will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Form Tutors

- To take the register during morning registration using the assigned system.
- To use a paper registration sheet to communicate all absences when the electronic system is not available.
- To ensure all students are aware that they must sign in at Reception if they arrive after 8.40am.
- To request from all students written confirmation of the reason for the absence where this has not already been provided.
- Tutors experiencing difficulty in obtaining a reason for a student's absence should discuss this with the appropriate Head of Year.
- Keep the Head of Year informed of any signs of suspected truancy.
- Inform the appropriate Head of Year of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences.
- To positively encourage all students and the tutor group to be aware of and engage with the reward systems related to excellent and improved attendance.

Heads of Year

- To encourage an ethos of excellent attendance and punctuality with all students.
- To monitor the attendance of all students within the year group.
- To analyse patterns of non-attendance and address these appropriately.
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with.
- ⊖ To monitor individual student's attendance
- To meet with Student Services Administrator and Vice Principal to discuss the attendance of students in their year group and specific issues relating to this.
- To identify students in need of further support and to use appropriate referral systems.
- To place attendance and punctuality on the agenda for Year Group meetings.
- To seek the support of Vice Principal as required.

Student Services Administrator

- Responsibility for producing attendance data.
- Daily administration for absences and first day contact.
- To operate the electronic attendance software on a daily basis.
- To ensure all 'paper' registers are transferred to the electronic system after registration if and when required.
- To print off registers (am and pm) in case of emergency evacuation.
- Contact parents/carers where there is unexplained absence.
- Pass on relevant information to the appropriate Head of Year regarding unusual or long term absences.
- To provide Head of Years with weekly updates of attendance to allow them to clear unauthorised absences.
- To operate the absence line and transfer information on to the attendance system.
- Amend registers accordingly.
- Monitor and review student attendance looking for patterns and trends with regard to absences.
- Monitor and review student punctuality.
- Generate letters of concern when attendance hits key percentage figures.
- Seek support from the Head of Year or Vice Principal where there are concerns about student attendance/punctuality.

Vice Principal

- To monitor attendance across Bishop Challoner Catholic College on a regular basis.
- To set and review challenging targets for attendance and support all staff and students to achieve them.
- To ensure electronic mechanisms for gathering attendance data are working effectively and staff are trained and supported in using them.
- To ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Ensure that unaccounted-for absences are followed up by getting in touch with parents/carers.
- To liaise with Student Services Administrators and ensure that attendance data is updated regularly and feedback is provided to students, parents, staff, governors and DfE on a regular basis.
- To provide compulsory attendance data to the DfE as and when requested.
- To lead the rewards policy for excellent and improved attendance.
- To ensure strategies to encourage high attendance receive a high profile with students, parents, staff and governors.
- To ensure strategies to address lateness work effectively.
- Liaise with the appropriate bodies over persistent absences.
- To liaise with external education providers and ensure regular attendance feedback is given to the school and the LA for students receiving off site provision.
- Liaise with agencies and the police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school.

Principal

- Set attendance targets and monitor progress.
- Determine (in collaboration with relevant senior staff) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested.
- Notify parents/carers as appropriate that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents/carers commit an offence.

Governing Body

- Approve the policy and any proposed changes.
- To be aware of the targets for attendance and current progress towards those targets.
- To be aware of strategies designed to encourage excellent and improved attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor the effectiveness of strategies used to monitor attendance and ensure appropriate requirements are funded and supported.
- To intervene in cases of severe poor attendance and punctuality and to offer support to ensure improvement.

In addition, schools are required to produce written home-school agreements which include clear understanding about attendance and punctuality.

Procedures

Regular and punctual attendance of students at the school is expected and is strictly enforced. It is both a legal requirement and essential in order for students to maximise their learning.

Registration

- All students are required to attend Bishop Challoner Catholic College Monday-Thursday 8.40am-3.10pm, Friday 8.40am-2.30pm
- In order to record attendance, students are registered at each lesson using an electronic registration system.
- All teachers must take a register within each lesson (preferably at the start) during the school day.
- ⊖ During morning registration the Form Tutor will take a register.

Lateness

- Any student arriving after 8.40am must sign in at Reception giving a reason for their absence. They will be recorded as late and marked as such in the registers.
- A detention will be set for students who have been late. A text message will be sent to parents/carers to inform them of the detention and/or a note made in the Student Planner.

Children Missing Education

The school will inform the local authority when a student is absent from school for 10 days or more without permission. They will also inform the local authority at regular intervals of any students that are regularly absent. The school has the right to remove a student from the school roll in line with DfE and local authority guidance.

The school has a safeguarding duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their students, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained absences and implement strategies detailed in this policy to address these.

Absence

- In case of illness, the school should be notified by telephone as soon as possible on each day of absence and the student must bring a written explanation of their absence to the Form Tutor on their return.
- If the school has not received notification of absence a telephone call or text message will be sent to the parent/carer asking for an explanation. The register will be updated.
- The Form Tutor should support the monitoring of any absence which remains unauthorised.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

It is the duty of the school to decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. An explanation does not itself authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered authorises it.

Reasons for Absence

Illness

If a student is absent as a result of illness the absence is authorised. This needs to be confirmed by a parent/carer in writing. If there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, the school can consult with the School Health Service or the student's general practitioner to confirm the condition.

Long term medical conditions

Where students are unable to attend school due to medical circumstances, parents and carers are required to inform the school at their earliest opportunity. The school will work in conjunction with parents and carers, medical professional and any other agencies, as required, to support and facilitate the education of the student.

Medical and Dental Appointments

As far as possible, appointments should be made out of school hours. If a medical or dental appointment has to be made during the school day, the school must be informed in writing beforehand stating the time of the appointment in order that the absence can be authorised.

All students must sign out at the Pastoral Office before they leave the school to attend the appointment and sign in again when they return. Students who have not provided written evidence of the appointment from their parents/carers may not be allowed to leave school. If there is any doubt about the authenticity of the letter, parents/carers will be contacted.

Family bereavements

The school recognises that the death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event and the school has the discretion to authorise such absences.

Days of religious observance

Absence due to participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong is authorised by the school.

Minding the house/Looking after siblings/Looking after parents

Such absences will constitute unauthorised absence.

Shopping during school hours

Such absence can ever be justified and is therefore unauthorised.

Special occasions/circumstances

It is the responsibility of the school to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not. Each application would be considered separately. Absences for social occasions such as birthdays and family outings are unauthorised by the School.

Family holidays

Family holidays during term time **WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED** unless permission is granted. Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time are required to apply in advance.

In considering whether to grant a term-time leave, the school will review:

- the circumstances involved
- the time and length of the proposed leave
- the student's attendance record
- any previous requests for leave of absence
- if it is close to examinations or tests

If permission is not granted and parents/carers take their child out of school, the absences will be recorded as unauthorised and the parent/carer will receive a Penalty Notice.

Strategies for Maintaining and Improving Attendance

- Attendance and punctuality are always discussed at weekly meetings between Form Tutors and Head of Year.
- Regular Academic Monitoring Meetings and Attendance Review meetings are held between Head of Year and Senior staff to discuss individual attendance concerns and strategies for improvement.
- Letters of concern will be sent home when attendance hits key percentages.
- Home visits and 'Safe and Well' checks are conducted. Where a student has not been in school for 3 consecutive days a health and well-being home visit may be conducted by school staff.
- Where students are persistent absentees (90% or below) home visits may be conducted earlier.
- Year group attendance and individual concerns highlighted at Academic Monitoring Meetings. Strategies are discussed concerning levels of intervention.

Strategies for Rewarding Good Attendance

- All students are part of the Attendance Raffle (incentive scheme).
- Certificates, praise post cards and achievement logs are used to reward students who have consistently high attendance or who have improved throughout the half term/term/year.
- Rewards each term/year for students who have consistently high or improved attendance.

Sixth Form Attendance and Registration Procedures

Registration

Year 12 and 13 students register with their Academic Tutor each morning and in the afternoon on designated days.

A register is taken in each lesson and marks are recorded.

Attendance

All Year 12 and 13 students are required to attend registration, all timetabled lessons and any other directed commitments. If an unavoidable absence arises then it must be reported to the Student Services Administrator as early as possible, but before 9.30am on the first day of absence and every day of absence thereafter. An indication of the length of absence is required.

For unavoidable appointments during the college day, written confirmation must be provided to the Student Services Administrator.

All known absences due to sickness will be authorised, unknown absences where there has been no notification of an absence will be unauthorised.

Please see the handbook for a list of circumstances deemed as authorised/unauthorised absences.

Punctuality

- All students need to be on time. If an unavoidable lateness arise, the following procedure applies-
- Students must sign in and follow the normal sign in procedure out of registration time
- Depending on the time late, the member of staff will either permit the student to enter the lesson or ask the student to leave and work independently.

Persistent Absence

- Head of Year will meet formally with the student.
- Parent/carer will be informed of the issues in relation to poor attendance and will be required to attend a meeting.
- Where absence is a concern, contact will be made on the first day of absence (and on subsequent days) with the student/parent/carer. Details of contact will be recorded.
- Where a student has not been in college for 3 consecutive days a health and well-being home visit may be conducted by school staff.
- Parents/carers will be informed of concerns with absence by text message, phone call, letter if and when required.
- All communication will be recorded.

Persistent Lateness

- Head of Year will meet formally with the student.
- Parent/carer will be informed of the issues in relation to poor punctuality and will be required to attend a meeting.

Students Leaving the Premises

- Students enter and exit through main reception at all times using their student ID badge to sign in and out on the Inventory system.
- Students are expected to register with their Tutor in the pm on designated days.
- Any changes to this procedure will be clearly communicated.
- Students found to be in breach of this procedure will be contravening their learning agreement and will be subject to sanctions detailed in the handbook.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The Student Services Administrator will provide attendance reports for each Form Tutor and Head of Year on a weekly basis to enable regular updating, monitoring and evaluating. Form Tutors are encouraged to take a proactive role in encouraging attendance and punctuality from all their tutees.

Head of Years and Assistant Principal receive a weekly full attendance report, outlining attendance and authorised/unauthorised absence percentages. This is reported to the Principal and the Governing Body by the appropriate Report.

Regular monitoring enables the school to:

- target individuals for action and support and set realistic targets
- actively involve parents in increasing attendance levels
- provide data on student's attendance via the reporting system and more regularly when required
- identify groups for targeted support
- inform future strategy and practice
- set targets at individual, Year Group and school level.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout Bishop Challoner Catholic College.